

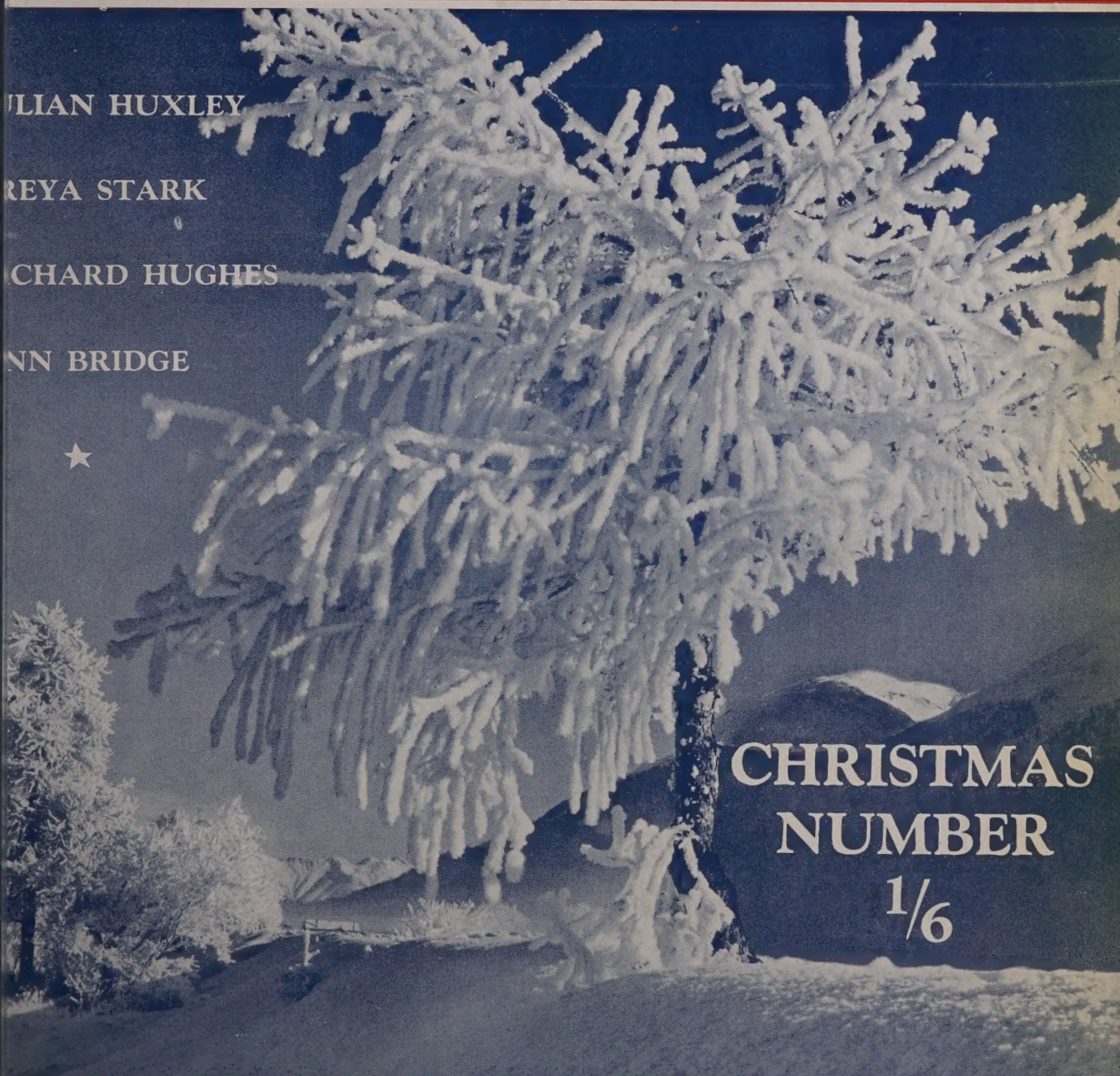
THE GEOGRAPHICAL MAGAZINE

JULIAN HUXLEY

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Birds and Men on St Kilda

by DR JULIAN HUXLEY, F.R.S.

St Kilda has always been 'news'. Once because of its human population, when it was famous as the loneliest inhabited isle; now because of the birds which remain in undisturbed possession and make the island the perfect hunting ground for practical ornithologists and biologists. Dr Huxley, emphasizing the richness of the scientific material lying there 'on our doorstep', does not lose sight of the sheer pleasure which the gathering of it, on such an expedition as he describes, can give

REMOTE islands have a fascination for the biologist. Their inaccessibility makes them a sanctuary, both for rare species and for immense congregations of commoner ones. Their isolation has prevented many forms from reaching them at all—what they lack is as interesting as what they possess. And this same isolation, combined with the difference of conditions, has often encouraged the evolution of special local types.

St Kilda has all these biological attractions. It is one of the few places in Britain where Leach's fork-tailed petrel nests—a beautiful little creature still more martin-like than its common relative the storm petrel. On a single one of its three component islands there lives nearly a quarter of the world's entire stock of gannets—those most spectacular of all our seabirds; while a conservative estimate of its puffin population would be nearly a quarter of a million. It has a melancholy historical attraction as the site of the last recorded British occurrence of the great auk. In 1821, only twenty years before the final extinction of the species, a specimen was captured there while swimming about in the bay, and was kept alive for some time by its captor. Unfortunately it later escaped while being indulged with a swim in the sea, contriving to slip the cord attached to one leg. And it is scientifically celebrated as the home of the St Kilda wren, a sub-species of the common wren so distinct that it was for some time classified as a separate species.

In addition it forms a part of a region where evolution can be studied in action. All round the north-west and north of

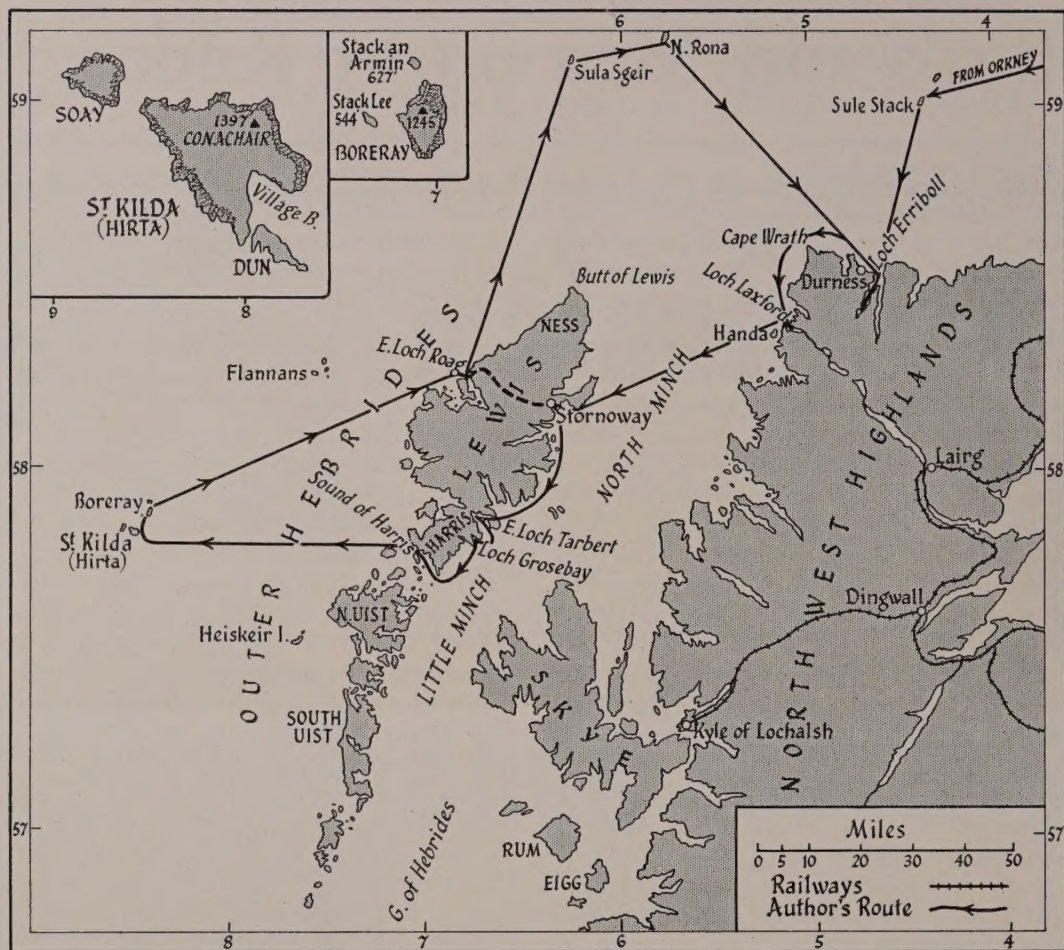
Scotland, the islands harbour animals and plants which are slightly different from those of the mainland. To take but a few examples from birds, the Shetland wren is also distinct enough to be classified as a distinct sub-species. So is the Shetland starling, and the hedge-sparrow and the song-thrush from the Hebrides.

What is more, the distinctive types of the Scottish islands form part of a graded system, a field of change, which extends inwards to the mainland coasts and outwards to the Faeroes and Iceland. If you take measurements of the different local races of wrens, you find that they increase in size at a pretty definite rate with increasing north latitude—almost $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent increase in size for every degree. The blackbirds of the western Highlands appear to differ slightly from those of Britain as a whole, and the difference is in the direction of that seen in the more distinctive races of the Hebrides.

We cannot suppose that wrens and thrushes were able to support glacial conditions: so that the observed changes must have taken place since the end of the Ice Age, certainly less than 20,000 years ago,—an infinitesimal period in the thousand-million-year perspective of evolution.

There is no necessity for the British biologist to go to the high arctic or to the tropics to study evolution: he has problems of the greatest interest on the doorstep of his own country.

So it came about that, looking for a holiday with a point to it, I attached myself this spring to an ornithological party which was going to visit St Kilda and other normally unvisited Scottish islands.



Stanford, London.

St Kilda was unquestionably the high spot of the voyage, not merely because of its biological interest but for its astonishing scenery and its human history. It is forty miles to westward of the Outer Hebrides. Forty miles doesn't sound far; but it is a good way for a 25-ton yacht against the wind, and we were all night making the island after leaving the Sound of Harris. The one anchorage is Village Bay, and even that is unsafe with southerly or easterly winds. The first sight of the island is a little disappointing—a grassy coomb, a little like the head of Fairfield in the Lakes, with the deserted village in its centre. After breakfast, we set off up to Conachair, the highest point, strung out in a line so as to cover more ground, as we

wanted to make a survey of all the land birds. An extraordinary fact was the number of snipe in and around the old village, although it did not look at all like snipe country.

Another peculiarity of St Kilda is that the rock pipit, which is usually confined to a narrow zone along the sea-cliffs, here extends far inland, into regions which would normally be the preserve of its relative the meadow pipit—and this in spite of the fact that meadow pipits also breed on the island.

This phenomenon, of changed habits towards the limits of the range of a species, or in other exceptional conditions, we encountered in several other birds elsewhere. The reed buntings of Lewis and the main-



The Escape party, photographed by James Fisher. From left to right, Dr Huxley; Ove, the Norwegian hand; Dr Blacker; Max Nicholson, and behind, on the right, David Robertson, owner and master

land opposite, in the absence of their usual sallow thickets and reed-beds, were nesting on islets in lochs, where, owing to the absence of browsing sheep, there were rather more trees and shrubs than on the mainland. Herons nest here in very small colonies, often on the face of a cliff, the nests sometimes on the ground. On an island in a loch on the east of Harris, some of the birds in a herring gull colony had made their nests among the roots of small trees—an astonishing situation for a gull.

Also on this islet was a reed bunting whose song differed so much from the normal type of the species that we were at first completely puzzled as to what the bird might be. But that is another story. The change of song that you find in many birds in the north is part of the general field of change in the region. The Shetland wren combines a distinctive rhythm and stridency of song with its large size and darker plumage: the blackbirds of the

north-west, though almost undistinguishable in appearance, have a feebler, less mellow, more thrush-like song than their southern relatives.

The only way to get to the gull colony on the islet was to swim. Fresh eggs would have been a welcome addition to ship diet: so each swimmer brought back a handkerchiefful. But that is still another story, and one with an unsatisfactory ending—almost all the eggs were hard-set!

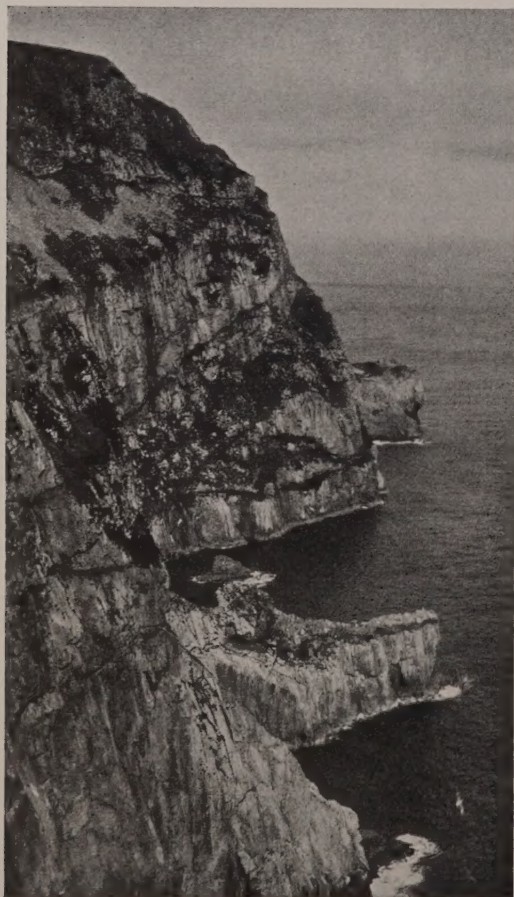
Revenons à nos moutons. Many plants, too, show changed habits in these parts. A cliff heronry we visited was in the midst of a sheet of bluebells running up into the heather. Bluebells grow in the open all along our western coasts, from the Scillies to Cape Wrath. It must be the lesser rainfall inland and to the east which restricts them to woodland.

All over the western Highlands the spotted orchis, instead of in the sheltered and rather rich situations where southerners

expect to find it, invades the moor and grows even among the heather. It was growing all over the bare slopes of St Kilda.

Finally there were the primroses. Though it was June, they were in full bloom on St Kilda, wherever there was a moist sheltered place. They were all down the gullies of the southern cliff; one of the most unexpected items of natural history that I ever saw or am likely to see was a fulmar petrel sitting on its nest at over 1300 feet on the cliffs of Conachair, entirely surrounded by large primroses!

The primroses have brought me to the



A. A. MacGregor

Conachair cliffs are the highest in Britain. Steep steps of bare rock alternate with patches of vegetation where thousands of white fulmars nest

cliffs. These are quite astonishing. Those of Hirta are the highest in Britain, within a yard or so of 1400 feet. They are not, however, nearly so precipitous as those of Foula in the Shetlands or Hoy in Orkney. They break down to the sea in steep green steps, interrupted by sheerer clifflets of bare rock. The entire slope is dotted with white specks. The impression is of strange cliff flowers; but they are in reality fulmar petrels, many thousands in sight at once.

Across the sea, four miles away, is Boreray, the home of the gannets. It lies there, a green uprising wedge, with two fine stacks off its western face; through the glasses these are seen to be topped with creamy white—dense crowds of breeding gannets. Seen thus from a distance it looks romantic enough, but the closer view is staggering. I have been in a good many parts of the world: but I can only recall two places which beat Boreray in immediate spectacular quality—the Grand Canyon and the Virunga volcanoes in the Western African Rift.

We sailed there in the afternoon. Landing is nowhere easy, but least difficult on the rocks at the foot of a steep grass slope. I measured the angle of slope on the six-inch map and found it exactly 45° —1 in 1. To those who climb it on a hot June day it looks and feels like 60° . It is honey-combed with puffin burrows; we estimated that over 50,000 puffins were nesting in it. Some members of Lord Dumfries' party on Hirta had come with us to try to secure fresh meat in the shape of the sheep which run wild on Boreray. At the sound of a rifle-shot, all the puffins flew out: they looked like a swarm of flies as they circled back from sea.

To the left the grass slope is bounded by a sheer rock wall about 800 feet high, plastered with gannets on every ledge. One of our party stayed to count them: his estimate was slightly over 4000 pairs.

The steep grass continues on and on at the same angle for 1200 feet. At its top is a range of pinnacles that might have been

designed by Doré; and the other side of the island is a sheer rock face, crowded with sea-birds. One of our party was a great enthusiast for Foula: but he admitted that Foula was beaten by Boreray.

Getting aboard again was complicated by the problem of the sheep that had been shot and gralloched. With considerable labour it was brought down a thousand feet to the edge of the rocks: but then what? The old boatman shouted up to throw it in: the land-party averred it would sink. After much argument it was pushed off and rolled, flailing its limbs, precipitously into the sea. It floated, and was safely hauled in over the dinghy's stern.

We cruised home under the western face. From below, the fantastic quality of the cliff was still more apparent, and the two stacks came into their own. You tend to discount the cliff scenery of St Kilda until a near view or a special angle obtrudes its super-normal scale upon you and forces you to readjust your ideas. These two stacks, from the top of Hirta or to the approaching yacht, seemed just a pair of unusually fine rocks. As we rounded the southern point, we realized that we were confronted with dimensions new to our experience. A glance at the chart showed us that this was indeed true. The lower of the two, Stac Lee, is 544 feet high—30 feet higher than the top of Beachy Head. The other, Stac an Armin, rises to well over 600 feet, but has not the same grandeur of form.

Stac Lee must be the most majestic sea rock in existence. It rises out of deep water, and as you sail within a few yards of the black mass, it gives you that gasping lift, like a cathedral or a flight of rockets. At one place it even overhangs. Its shape too is magnificent—a great blade of rock, somewhat longer than broad, yet not so thin as to convey any impression of fragility. Hosts of similes poured into my mind. At first I thought of the emerging prong of a sea god's trident, the crude and



Robert Atkinson

Four miles north-east of Hirta lies Boreray with its attendant stacks—Stac Lee in the foreground and Stac an Armin to the left

gigantic trident of some northern Poseidon. Then suddenly I had it—it was like one of the great stones at Avebury (those early megaliths to my mind so much more impressive than Stonehenge), magnified some fifty diameters and erected out of sheer bravado in the sea.

Its top is bevelled off diagonally, and this sloping plane is white with densely packed gannets; gannet ledges lace the black face obliquely with white, and guillemots and kittiwakes inhabit the lesser projections.

Gannets inhabit 21 distinct colonies, from the St Lawrence to the Bass, from Iceland to southern Ireland. This single colony of Boreray comprises about a fifth of all the gannets in the world. Two separate estimates have given concordant figures—about 17,000 breeding pairs: with the non-breeders, about 40,000 of these enormous and spectacular birds.

Stac Lee looks wholly inaccessible. As a matter of fact, it was much more easily and more often climbed by the St Kildans than Stac an Armin. There is a relatively easy landing, and a ledge leading diagonally upwards. They came there regularly

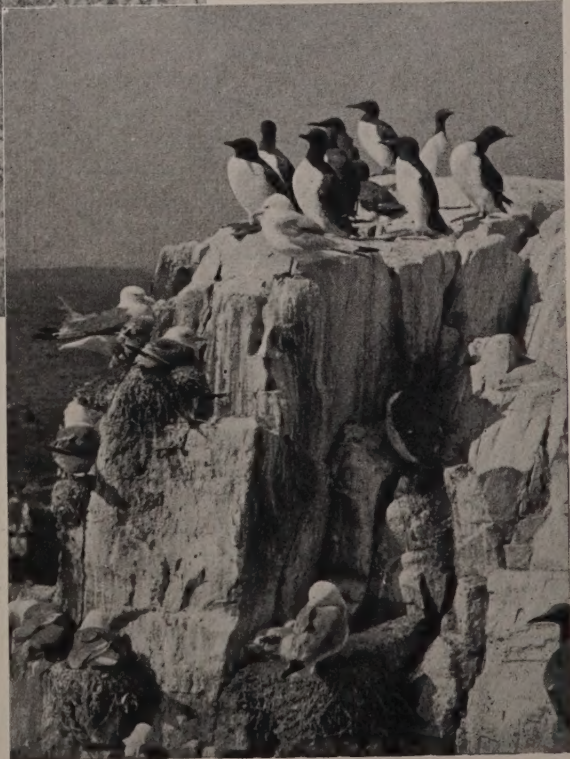


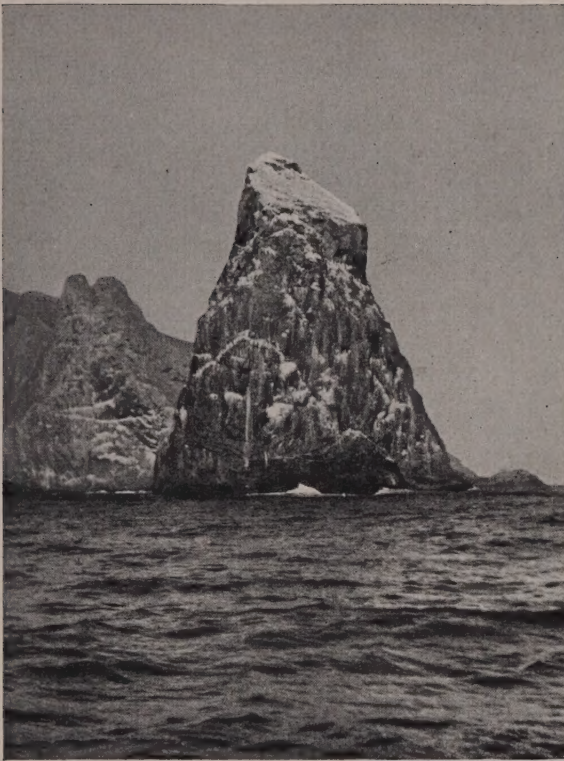
Dr Julian Huxley taking notes above the Southern Cliffs of Hirta to complete a census of breeding land birds. The figures were afterwards compared with those of 1931, the year that the island was evacuated. Among the land birds are widely differing species, such as for instance snipe, which have greatly increased in number, and the St Kilda wren, which is quite distinct from the mainland form and inhabits the stone walls and clefts of the now deserted village. Its numbers remain about the same

James Fisher

James Fisher

Also taking notice, if not notes, are a group of sea-birds consisting of guillemots and kittiwakes. The latter were of interest for their numbers alone, but with the guillemots the point was to find the percentage of 'bridled' birds: 16 per cent was the final figure, after intensive counting of colonies. Sea-birds are often more difficult to count than land birds owing to their greater inaccessibility





Stac Lee is probably the most majestic sea rock in existence. It rises out of deep water and when seen from a distance of a few yards is as impressive as a cathedral or a flight of rockets. Its shape is magnificent, like one of the great stones at Avebury. Its top is bevelled off diagonally and the sloping plane is white with densely packed gannets. Guillemots and kittiwakes inhabit its lesser projections

Niall Ro

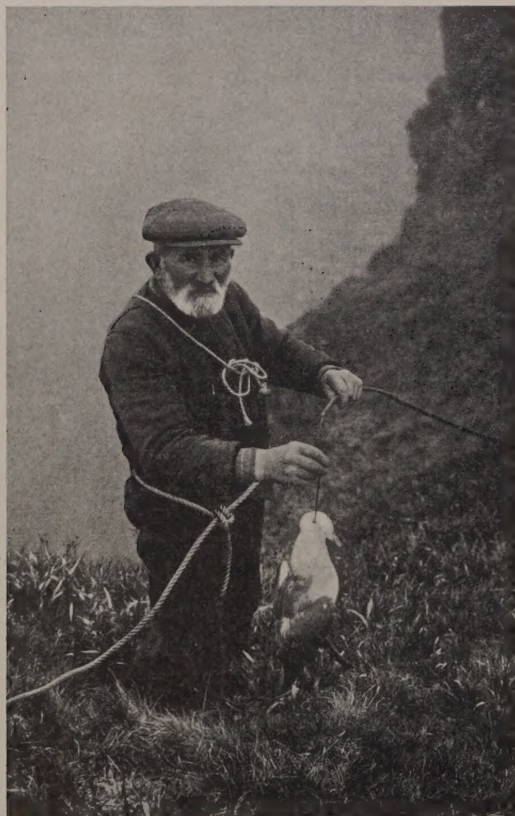
James Fisher

A gannet alighting on its nest. It is the largest of our sea-birds, more closely related to the pelican than any other British bird. The largest single colony in the world is on the islands of St Kilda, numbering about 16,900 breeding pairs, roughly a fifth of the world's gannet population. It lays only one egg a year so the St Kildans' annual depredations must have taken a heavy toll. The birds' colonization of the Shetlands probably began as this slaughter diminished



every year to catch the young gannets for their winter provisions.

The human biology of St Kilda is as remarkable as its birds. I should say *was*, not *is*, for in 1931 its entire population was evacuated, thus closing a chapter which had been begun before the historic period. Human and avian biology were indeed inextricably interwoven on St Kilda. The human population was essentially parasitic on the birds. Fishing was never popular, and its results quite subsidiary. It is true that sheep also played a prominent part in the island economy, that there were a few cattle, and that barley, oats and potatoes were grown; nevertheless, without the birds they could neither have fed themselves nor paid their dues.



Finlay McQueen, a famous St Kilda fowler noted for his skill and daring, seen at the edge of the cliffs on Hirta having just snared a fulmar

Niall Rankin

The total number of inhabitants seems never to have reached 200. It suffered a marked diminution in the early 18th century, and since 1750 fluctuated between 70 and 110. Inbreeding was avoided through the occasional arrival of refugees or of exiles banished from the mainland as undesirables. (In 1732 the unfortunate Lady Grange, whose husband disliked and feared her, was kidnapped, and, after being detained on the island of Heiskeir near N. Uist for three years, was spirited away to the safer prison of St Kilda, where she remained for eight years more.)

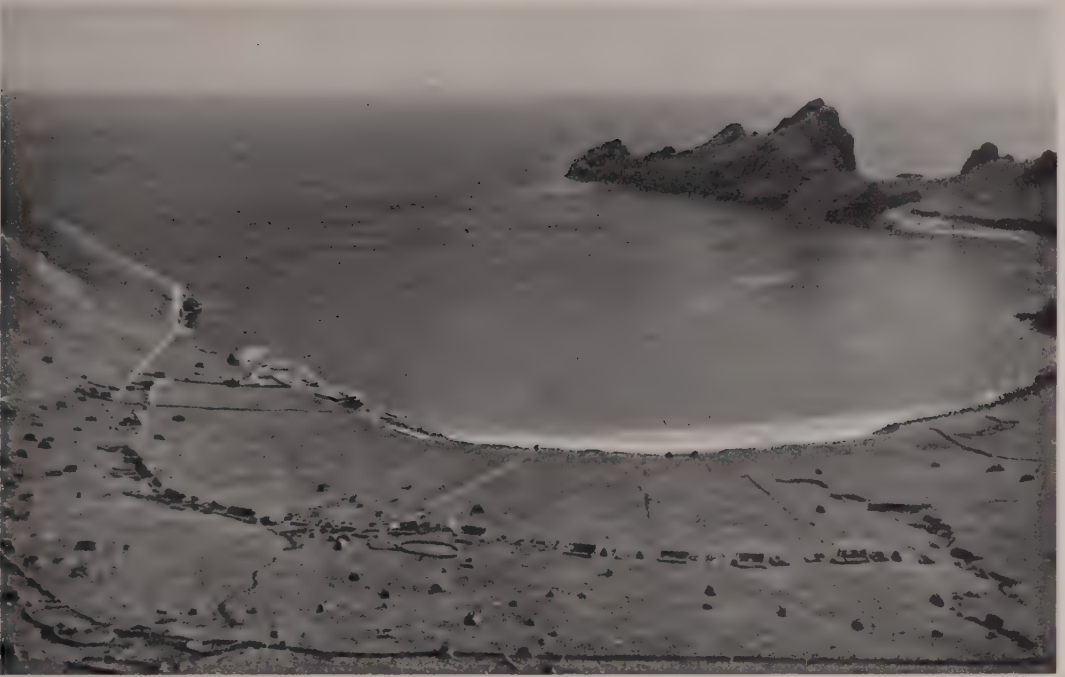
The birds on which they chiefly relied were gannets, fulmars, puffins, and, to a lesser extent, guillemots. Puffins were sometimes caught in their burrows with the aid of a dog, but usually snared in a noose at the end of a long rod. They formed the chief meat diet of the islanders in summer. A puffin was generally boiled in porridge 'to give the porridge a flavour'.

The gannets were very much sought after for winter provender. Young gannets, like the young of some other seabirds, become extremely fat and at one stage actually surpass the adults considerably in weight. Their parents then abandon them. After living on their fat for some days, hunger prompts them to try their wings, and they throw themselves off the ledge to volplane into the sea.

Each year the St Kildans made an expedition to Boreray at the time when the 'gougs', as the fat young are called, were most abundant. They knocked three or four thousand on the head, and brought them back to be salted down against winter.

But the fulmar was the St Kildans' great standby. Like the puffin, fulmars were snared in nooses; but unlike puffins, fulmars often breed on steep places, and great skill and daring was needed, as with the gannets, to obtain a full supply.

The carcasses were salted down for winter, the feathers were plucked and used to stuff mattresses, and the oil was em-



Robert Atkinson

The deserted village in Village Bay. The houses stand back from the shore and what appear to be cairns are really cletts: stone huts used, when St Kilda was inhabited, to store food

ployed to give light during winter. Both oil and feathers were also exported to pay the laird's rent.

The fulmar's oil is a very peculiar phenomenon. Fulmars feed on fish and plankton; the oil from these is retained in the stomach, whence the bird can bring it up and eject it at an enemy. The oil has a nauseous smell, and so potent a weapon is it that no other bird, not even the much larger bonxies or the formidable greater blackbacked gull, will try conclusions with a fulmar. If it hits your clothes, they will stink for days. I must confess that when, as I was scrambling along some precipitous slope, I heard the disgusting retching noise made by a fulmar bringing up her ammunition, I tended automatically to dodge out of range in a way not always conducive to safe foothold.

One of the most curious things about the fulmar's oil is its abundance. The average yield per bird is stated to be nearly half a

pint. The St Kildans, after noosing a bird, squeezed the oil out of its mouth into a bag made of a gannet's stomach, and so transported it home.

The island is dotted with little stone beehive huts, called 'cletts'. These served to store the carcasses and feathers of birds until they were needed, and also to hold turves, potatoes and grain. We came on one at 1100 feet on a promontory jutting out from the great cliff-face of Conachair.

There are so many curious and interesting facts about St Kilda which one does not want to pass over. The great Dr Johnson once told Boswell to buy the island so that they might live there for a time—a project which, perhaps fortunately, was never carried out.

One of Dr Johnson's pronouncements concerned the famous 'boat-cough' of St Kilda, the disease, occasionally fatal, which seized the islanders every time that a boat arrived from the mainland. It is obvious



R. M. Lockley

Soay sheep, showing more plainly than any other breed their descent from the great sheep ancestor, the mouflon, have lived on St Kilda for centuries. Their build fits them to survive on these rugged cliffs

enough today that this was due to the absence of germs on St Kilda and the consequent absence of immunity to colds and 'flu among the St Kildans. But even Seton, in 1878, with similar facts from Tristan da Cunha before him, could suggest, as an alternative to contagion, that the ailment might be caused 'by a feverish excitement arising from the contact of a higher with a lower civilization'! So we need not be surprised that Dr Johnson was sceptical. 'How can there be a physical effect without a physical cause? . . . If one stranger gives them one cold, two strangers must give them two colds, and so in proportion.' But he praised Macaulay, the chronicler of the islands, a great uncle of the historian, for his broadmindedness, as a Whig, in insisting on the existence of so miraculous and irrational a phenomenon.

In the early 18th century the women wore no shoes or stockings save a sock or feather-shoe made out of the skin of a gannet's neck and back of the head—such

a shoe lasted four or five days. They were indeed bird people.

A curious fact about the St Kildans is that they did not use real peat, but only turf. This may be partly explained by the peat-bogs being at a height of over 1000 feet above the village, but is certainly curious since by cutting turf they damaged the grazing for their beasts, as well as restricting themselves to a very inferior fuel.

Which brings me to the Soay sheep. These are of great interest as being in all probability the most primitive domestic breed in existence, showing the least modification from their wild ancestor. They are not so large, nor are their horns so fine, but in general their resemblance to Mouflon and other wild species is much closer than to any other domestic breed. They have the same long legs and small bodies, the same active carriage, the same general colouration (a light reddish brown with light rump), the same short hair, only an inch or so long, with dense underwool, the same fringe of long hair on the throat.

They are quite different from the Hebridean breed.

Nothing certain is known of their history, but it may be taken that they represent a very early stage in western man's moulding of the wild sheep into a wool-bearing, mutton-producing machine, a stage which everywhere else was supplanted by improved breeds, and survived in St Kilda because of its remoteness.

To see them scampering about the cliffs and steep slopes of the islands is to be transported far back in human cultural history, perhaps to 3000 or 4000 B.C.

The interdependence of birds and man is beautifully illustrated by the recent history of fulmar and gannet. One of the most remarkable facts in recent European natural history is the steady spread of the fulmar. In the Faeroes, a period of rapid increase was initiated in the middle of the 19th century, and has continued until the present.

In Britain it was not known to breed outside St Kilda before 1878, when it colonized Foula in the Shetlands. By 1891 it had reached the main part of the Shetland archipelago, and by the turn of the century was breeding in Orkney and Sutherland. Today, it is prospecting breeding-sites as far south as Land's End and the Scillies on the west and is already breeding at Flamborough Head on the east.

There seems no question but that this spectacular increase and expansion of range was due to the introduction of kerosene and of tinned foods. The inhabitants of the Faeroes and St Kilda, the two main breeding-places of the species in Europe, (apart from Iceland and, if it be European, Spitsbergen) killed fewer fulmar because they were no longer dependent on fulmar oil for their light and salted fulmar for their winter food. As the St Kildans slaughtered between 9000 and 12,000 fulmars every year, and as the annual increase through young birds was only about 20,000, it is no wonder that the balance of nature was tilted. The surplus

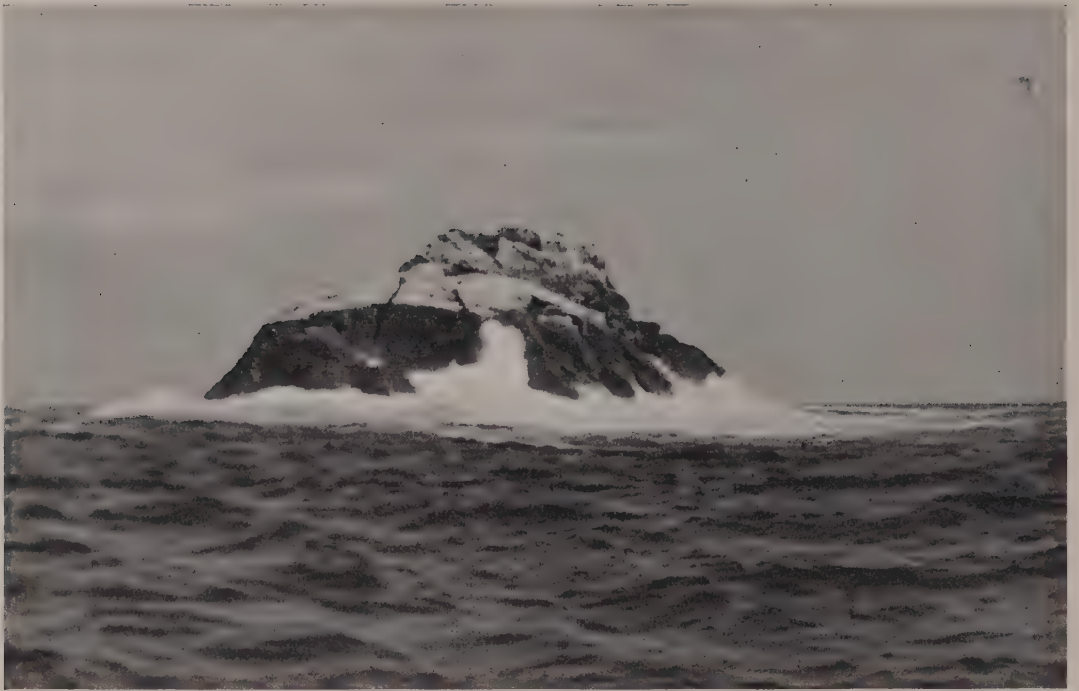
fulmar population spilled out along other coasts.

There are about 20,000 pairs on St Kilda, while those on the rest of our coast are estimated at about 33,000 pairs. Looked at from another angle, the fulmar population of the British Isles has nearly trebled during the last half-century—a rate of increase only a little higher than that of the human population of England and Wales during the first half of the 19th century.

The gannets, meanwhile, had not multiplied. The young gannets were the St Kildans' greatest delicacy and their capture the islanders' greatest sport. As the birds lay only one egg, and their total numbers were probably rather less than today, their numbers were held severely in check. But since about 1914 the gannet too has embarked on a period of increase—not so striking as that of the fulmar, but none the less definite. Two quite new colonies have been established in the Shetlands, and there has been a marked increase in the numbers in the Irish and Welsh colonies. For the quarter-century, the increase is in the neighbourhood of 15 per cent.

One of the chief aims of our party was to estimate the number of gannets on St Kilda and two other rarely visited breeding colonies. This was part of a scheme to enumerate the world population of gannets—the first occasion on which a complete census will have been taken of any wide-ranging wild species.

The layman may well ask how gannets are counted. The first sight of a big colony is bewildering, and a census would seem impossible. However, it is eminently possible, as repeated counts by separate observers have shown. The simplest and best method of counting gannets is just to count them. Each observer takes a section of cliff, and goes over it with his glasses, ledge by ledge, counting the number of breeding pairs. One bird is always on the nest: when both are present



James Fisher

Sule Stack where some 3500 pairs of gannets nest. Only one ornithologist has ever landed on it, and it was not mapped before this expedition surveyed it



J. S. Huxley

With life-jackets on, before attempting to land on Sula Sgeir. James Fisher, on the right, fell in

they will be close together, so that a pair can be distinguished from the separate sitters.

Direct counting, however, is difficult or impossible from the sea, unless in a dead calm. You then have to count birds on some especially favourable section, and then estimate the proportion which this bears to the total area occupied by nesting birds. In some cases a photographic method is the best—telephoto photographs are taken, and the birds counted on enlargements from them.

Experience shows that direct counts in favourable circumstances are accurate to 2 or 3 per cent; and it can be taken that the world figure (which provisionally may be put at 175,000 birds) will be accurate certainly to within 10 and probably to about 5 per cent.

The other two gannetries which we visited were Sule Stack and Sula Sgeir. They form part of a chain of small islands whose very existence is unknown to most people, strung out some twenty-five to forty miles off the northern Scottish coast—Sule Skerry, with its lighthouse, Sule Stack with 3500 pairs of gannets, North Rona, the greatest breeding ground of Atlantic seals in Britain, of which Dr Fraser Darling has written, and Sula Sgeir, with another 4000 pairs of gannets. Sule or Sula is, of course, from the same root as Solan in Solan Goose, the gannet's alternative name, and is the Gaelic for gannet.

Sule Stack is wonderfully impressive considering its small size—a bare 125 feet in height—or perhaps because of it. It is an outpost of the land, upthrust out of the hostile sea, teeming with life, yet a life alien (though not hostile) to ours, northern, remote, with its own quality and its own values. It reminded me of Tom's visit to Mother Carey in Kingsley's *Water Babies*—Mother Carey who made things make themselves—a workshop of animate nature.

The highest point rises up curved to hook over in an overhang, sheer above a

sloping slab, like a wave immortalized in rock. The rock is black, with the white of breaking waves round its base, and its higher parts frosted over with the white of gannets.

It was too rough to land here, but on Sula Sgeir we managed to put one man ashore, though the swell was enough to warrant lifebelts for the dinghy party. Sula Sgeir seems to be the only gannetry in Britain whose numbers have gone down in the last seven years. This is without doubt due to the fact that it is also the only gannetry which is still raided for young birds: every year an expedition sets out from Ness, in the north of Lewis, and kills between one and two thousand gannets for food. It is to be hoped that public opinion and the County Council will soon put a stop to this practice.

Another objective of our trip was to fill in some blanks in the census of bridled



Fraser Darling

A normal guillemot, with her 'bridled' mate. The 'bridle' runs round the eye and extends backwards

guillemots. 'Bridled' or 'spectacled' guillemots differ from the normal in having a white rim with a hindward prolongation round each eye. They are not a distinct species or sub-species, as was at one time supposed, but a Mendelian variety which interbreeds freely with the normal. In the books they are usually described as rare aberrations. So they are in the south of Britain: but about half-way along our coast their numbers begin to increase. On the Farnes they make up 5 per cent of the total; on the Orkneys 10 to 13; in the Shetlands 23 to 26; while in Iceland and Bear Island they are well over 50 per cent, and thus constitute the normal type, while our normal is there the aberration.

What the precise meaning of the phenomenon may be is as yet obscure. Either the bridled variety is a new and advantageous mutation which is extending its numbers and range at the expense of the normal (as has happened with the black variety of the brush-tailed opossum in Tasmania), or there is a balance of advantage between the two types, the bridled being favoured in the north, the normal in the south (as occurs with the black and grey varieties of the hamster in Russia).

In any case, the first step is clearly to map the distribution of bridling accurately, and to see whether it changes with the passage of time.

St Kilda was one of the places for which very few data were available. The guillemot ledges here are not easily accessible, but we managed to count nearly a thousand birds and to find that the percentage was about 16, much higher than anticipated. An intensive afternoon on Handa, just south of Cape Wrath, yielded a count of over 3000, and confirmed the previous estimate within 0.5 per cent.

The end of our trip deserves record as illustrating the difficulties of communication that still keep the western isles so remote. One of our party wanted to be back in London for a Monday evening

meeting. We pushed across through the night from St Kilda to reach the west of Lewis early on Saturday, caught a bus in to Stornoway—to find that there was no possibility whatever of arriving in time. No boat sails on Saturday night, as this would desecrate the Sabbath: and the Sunday night boat was too late.

We explored Stornoway and its wooded park, one of the only two woods in the Hebrides; slept aboard the boat, set off soon after dawn on Sunday, visited Sula Sgeir and North Rona, and sailed through the night to Loch Erriboll. There we found that a bus recorded on the time table was in reality non-existent; cadged a lift on a road foreman's car to Durness; found a car at the local hotel (which had on its notepaper 'Railway Station: Lairg, 58 miles'); caught the train at Lairg; explored Inverness between trains; and reached London before the letters we had posted in Stornoway.

Communications may be difficult: but it is very well worth while overcoming the difficulties. The north of Scotland and its western and northern fringe of islands constitute a region where the arctic fauna overlaps the temperate. Whooper swans and great northern divers and Sclavonian grebes have invaded it from the North, and the mainland forms have thrown out outposts to the islands and beyond them to the Faeroes and Iceland. It teems with life: the birds outnumber the human inhabitants many-fold, and their congregations on the bird rocks are not easily to be surpassed. Seals bob up wherever you anchor, and it is a poor day when you do not see a school of porpoises or small whales and some 25-foot basking sharks. It has a unique history and pressing human problems of a dwindling population, top-heavy with old people.

Thus to the biologists of Britain it is a laboratory on the doorstep of their own country where they can find an inexhaustible store of material for the study of evolution in action.

Early Days in Mauritius

by JACQUES COCHEMÉ

Of the maps and myths inspired by the Island of Mauritius there is no end. From the earliest times, the great events that determined the course of history in spheres far removed from it in space were reflected within its shores and the versatility of its career was matched by the variety of its inhabitants. These last, and the legends which perpetuate their memory, M. Cochemé brings again to life

'The story of this island is so interesting that it is always painful to give it up to pass on to other topics.' So wrote, in 1890, Prince Roland Bonaparte, a geographer. He added: '*C'est pourquoi on y revient toujours avec plaisir*'. This charming tribute is not an isolated compliment to versatile Mauritius which has managed to produce the rarest bird, the most romantic heroine and the most precious stamp in the world.

Equally merited is its proud motto: *Stella Clavisque Maris Indici*, the Star and the Key of the Indian Ocean; placed as it was on the way to the East round the Cape of Good Hope—an island, forty miles long, with all the refreshments early navigators could ask for and not a single wild beast, snake, or morbid germ.

Ptolemy's maps of the world merely show an 'I. Menuthias' (Madagascar) of good shape and position. But there is no doubt that the Mascarene Group, Mauritius, Reunion and Rodrigues, figured on Arab charts.

Until the beginning of the 16th century the Arabs were in sole control of the sea trade with the East in the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea. The goods they brought back eventually reached the great redistributing centres: Venice and Genoa.

This state of things was completely upset by the explosive expansion of the heroic and golden age of Portugal. And very soon after da Gama's epoch-making trip, which resulted in a crop of maps illustrating the recent discoveries of the Portuguese in the East—as early, in fact, as 1502—the Mascarenes appear on charts and portolans. But they still bear Arab names and are probably directly transcribed from maps found on captured Moorish trading

vessels which no doubt fired the imagination and stimulated the enterprise of the Portuguese invaders of the Indian Sea.

The position of the islands is very accurately recorded; far better, in fact, than in maps published nearly a century later. They are called Dinamosar, Dinarobi and Dinamogrobin. Dinamogrobin (Reunion) most probably means 'western island'. As for the other two, there have been various suggestions, talks of turtles and poisonous fish. But the most original explanation is certainly one Visdelou had, recently, from



The earliest European map of Mauritius. The Duke of Ferrara had it drawn, probably from Arab charts, for his master the King of Portugal in 1502 to show Portuguese discoveries. Till 1859 it was preserved by the Dukes of Modena; when their palace was sacked it disappeared for years until found in a butcher's shop. It is now in the library at Modena

somebody he met at the British Museum: Dinarobi would mean 'island of Arab faith', and Dinamosar 'island of Christians under Arab domination'. It is extremely hazardous to conjecture who might be these Christians enslaved so far from the Mediterranean focus; might they have been Ethiopians? The Arabs have left in Mauritius no known traces of their visits.

The actual date and circumstances of the discovery of the Mascarene Archipelago by the Portuguese were for long a speculative subject. This is how M. Albert Pitot, an authority on the history of Mauritius, puts forward the theory now substantiated by recently published Portuguese maps:

The custom which generally held good with Portuguese navigators was to consult the almanac and name any new land they met on their voyage, first after the saint inscribed at that date, next after their flag-ship, and lastly after their commander.

One of the islands is given on the early maps as Santa Apollonia; as that saint was honoured on February 9, the natural inference is that Mauritius was discovered on February 9, and the others a few days later. This being admitted, there only remained to make sure of the year when a Portuguese squadron—for Portuguese ships always travelled in company—could have passed in this neighbourhood in the first fortnight of February. Among several theories, the following has met with approval. In November 1506, fourteen Portuguese vessels, commanded by Tristan Da Cunha and Afonso Albuquerque, anchored at Mozambique. With the object of visiting the shores of Madagascar, which had been recently discovered, Da Cunha abandoned his flagship and embarked on a small craft better suited for a coastal cruise. Albuquerque may have accompanied him, leaving his ship, the *Cirne*, to the care of his lieutenant, Diego Fernandez Pereira. During the absence of his chief, why should not this officer, apprised by the Arabian maps of the existence of adjoining islands, have attempted to ascertain the facts? Reaching Reunion on February 9, he may have called it Santa Apollonia; meeting Mauritius next, he may have

named it *Cirne*; and finally, designated Rodrigues as Diego Fernandez, which, abbreviated as Dgo Frz, was probably rendered afterwards as Domingo Friz.

The colonial methods of the Portuguese were exhaustive rather than constructive. They never settled in Mauritius. They merely used it as a stopping-place on the route to the East where they could replenish their casks with fresh water and make good their vitamin deficiencies.

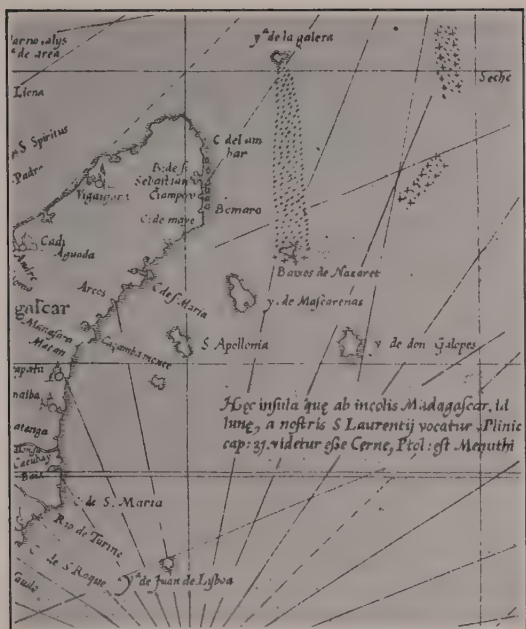
One Abbé de la Caille, who came to Mauritius in 1753 and triangulated it for the first time, wrote that the Portuguese let loose on the island pigs, goats, deer and monkeys, adding that they were very fond of the last. De la Caille was a man of learning and an excellent surveyor; but we rather doubt his authority for writing that. The Dutch, otherwise keen observers, do not mention these animals. Furthermore their presence on the island disturbs our theories about the dodo.

With the absorption of Portugal by Spain and the decline of its sea power, visits to Mauritius became more infrequent and ceased altogether towards the end of the 16th century.

Meanwhile other European nations began to arm vessels and send them to India to fetch the silk and spices which, hitherto, owing to Portugal's monopoly in the East, they had been able to obtain only from Lisbon. This impulse was especially strong in Amsterdam, the middleman of Europe.

In March 1598 eight Dutch ships under Admirals Van Neck and Van Warwick left the Texel to investigate further the possibilities disclosed by previous expeditions; and in 1601 Corneille Nicholas printed at Amsterdam a 'Journal containing the true discourse and historic narration of the journey . . . of the most memorable happenings, of the rich cargo and safe return'.

They had rounded the Cape of Good Hope in August when a storm dispersed them. Vice-Admiral Wibrant van War-



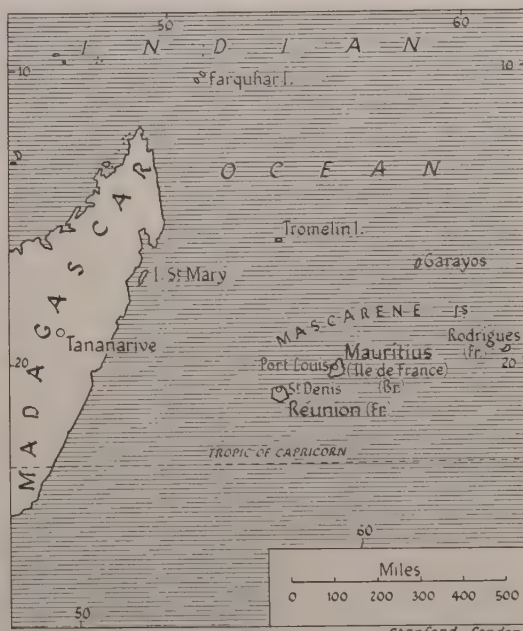
Section of Mercator's Marine Chart of the world published in 1569. St Apollonia is Reunion; Mauritius is Mascarenas (after Pedro Mascarenhas, supposed to have discovered the island); Don Galopes is Rodrigues



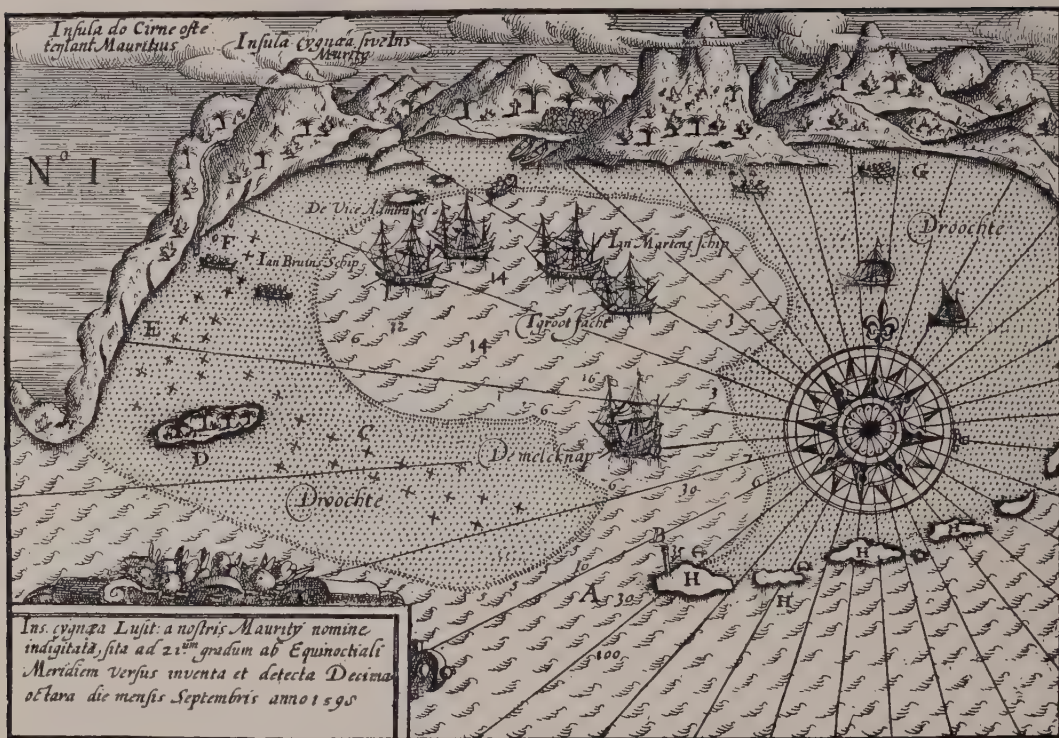
From a map drawn by Forhani in 1570. Redundant islands are due to the impossibility of checking information received from explorers and the cartographer's resolve to risk duplication rather than omit an island or two!



Fragment of Linschoten Itinerario of 1596 showing the imaginary island Juan de Lisboa. The fiction was later exploited by Mauritian pirates, who pretended to radiate from it, and thus eluded punitive expeditions



A modern map covering the same area. It gives the culminating verdict both on the shape and number of the islands that form the archipelago and shows how far the old map-makers were misled by 'travellers' tales'



Map drawn by members of Admiral Van Warwick's fleet in 1598 and published in 1601 by Corneille Nicholas of Amsterdam in his Journal of the voyage in which appeared the following notes:

A. is the entrance to the harbour which we call Warwick after our Vice-Admiral.

B. and D. are trees put by us on islets to use as landmarks.

C. and E. are salt streams where we fished. Fish is so abundant there that it can be speared; but the net is more elegant.

F. is a nice patch of water, deep enough for a whaler to tack about. Many birds which feed on fish are to be found there.

G. There our Admiral sailed about for sport and sowed oranges and lemons, peas and many fruits.

H. Islets useful for defending the harbour.

wick and five vessels came upon the island Do Cirne on September 17 in the afternoon. They found a landing-place and anchored on the 19th. Finding it uninhabited, they formally took possession and called it Mauritius, after Maurice of Nassau.

They had been more than four months at sea and the sick were landed and accommodated in huts, 'until they recovered their pristine health, a good proof of the serenity of the land'.

The whole fleet having arrived they attended, in two batches, a religious

service: 'singing praise and thanking God for having taken us to such a place where we found such refreshments; had we not arrived here, there is no doubt that a good many amongst us would not have lived to tell the tale, for we were suffering badly from scurvy'.

A further impulse of thankfulness and religious fervour made them baptize, in the name of Laurent, a native from Madagascar whom they had brought along with them.

They found the island covered with ebony of the best quality, and caught



Also from Corneille Nicholas's 'Journal containing the true discourse and historic narrative of the journey', which relates the Dutchmen's adventures in Mauritius. These notes accompany it

1. Tortoises so big that four men could stand on one without stopping it from walking; and ten sit in its shell.
2. This bird is the size of a swan. We call it nauseous bird because we took no notice of it as soon as we caught a great many tender doves and other little birds.
3. A date palm with leaves so large that they afford protection from rain and sun.
4. Is a bird called Rabos forcados with a forking tail.
5. A bird we called 'Indian crow' being of the size of a parrot and tricolour.
6. On this tree we put up a board with the crests of Zeeland Holland and Amsterdam and the words: Christianos Reformados.
7. This palm is very refreshing for the portion marked A was very good for scurvy.
8. A bat of large size with a head like a marmouset. There was a great number of those and they hung up from trees, so.
9. There we forged our ironwork and made a boat for our admiral who had lost his.
10. Huts for those residing on the island and the smiths and carpenters.
11. On this spot our minister, Peter Delphois, a sincere and candid man, preached with severity and without excepting anyone. A party went before dinner and the rest after.

without effort, or cunning, numerous fish and birds. To them we owe the first description of that singular wingless bird, the dodo, *Didus ineptus*; they called it *walglijke vogel* 'nauseous bird', but they confess that they may have been biased by the fact that the island was overrun with turtle doves, delicious and easily captured.

The dodo represents a rare adaptation to a no less rare environment. Similar birds were found on the other two Mascarene islands: in Rodrigues the 'solitaire', and in Reunion another solitaire and the blue bird. That the existence of these large flightless birds accorded with the delicate equilibrium on an island where the only other inhabitants were a few rats—no doubt introduced by visiting ships—and some enormous tortoises and lizards, is proved by the rapid extinction of the dodo less than eighty years after the first Dutch settlement.



The Dodo, a fat and indolent bird which as it was unable to fly could easily be clubbed. For wings it had only a few black feathers, for tail little curly grey feathers; it had also a 'round behind'

An indolent creole, the dodo was fat and lazy and could easily be clubbed by sailors. His one asset was a terrific digestion, assisted by a strong beak which could crush anything, the final grinding being effected by large stones, the size of a man's fist, which he had in his stomach.

'These birds are of the size of our swans', related Warwick's Dutchmen, 'and have a funny sort of skull-cap on their strange bald heads. Instead of wings they have three or four black feathers, and instead of tails four or five curly little feathers, greyish in colour. . . . They have round behinds.'

François Leguat was a French Protestant refugee in Holland who, with seven companions, attempted to settle, in 1691, on the then desert island of Rodrigues. He was there for two years. A gifted naturalist and an able observer, he published a narration of his adventures with some excellent descriptions of animals and plants of Rodrigues and Mauritius. His account of the solitaire was found to agree in all details with remains subsequently dug up.

On that island which had nothing in the way of quadrupeds but rats, lizards and tortoises in such numbers 'that one could walk for more than two hundred paces on their backs without setting foot on the earth', the solitaire was nearest to the human species, a position of interest which only the sea manatee could dispute. And Leguat wrote about them with great warmth: 'The female is admirably beautiful; there are blondes and brunettes; I call "blonde" the colour of blonde hair. They have a kind of bandeau like a widow's peak on top of their beaks, fawn in colour. Not one feather overlaps another on their bodies for they take great care to adjust and to polish them with their beaks. The feathers along the thighs are rounded off at the end like shells and as they grow very thickly on that place the effect produced is pleasant. They have on the crop two mounts of a plumage whiter than the rest, which represent admirably the breast of a woman. They walk so



An illustration from de Bry's India Orientales, a book of popular science which was published in 1601. It was no doubt inspired by what is said of the tortoises in Nicholas's 'Journal'

proudly and so gracefully all together that one cannot help admiring and loving them, so that very often with us their good looks saved their life.'

There was in Mauritius another wingless bird, the *Aphanapteryx*, which resembled the kiwi and fed on insects. It was covered with silky hair-like feathers, red in colour.

All these birds are now extinct. There was no room for them in the new man-made physiognomy of the Mascarene archipelago; they became out of date. Hence the proverb: 'as dead as the dodo'.

The dodo had to give way to wild pigs and monkeys, while the ebony was ruthlessly removed by men. But who will blame the early settlers of Mauritius for this depredation when to this day de-

forestation is carried out all over the world and brings its reward?

The Dutch report ends with these words: 'All told, it is a land rich in fish and birds, so much so that it was better than all the others in the voyage'.

Owing to this favourable account Dutch ships started calling for fresh food and ebony on their way to the East. In 1610 Pieter Both, going to Batavia to take up the post of Governor-General, took refuge on the island to repair his vessel. He liked the place and, five years later, on his way home, as he was coming to revisit it, he was caught by a cyclone and perished on the reefs of Tombeau Bay. His three vessels were probably laden with 'souvenirs'; and we have there the first potential source of the many treasures said to lie in

Mauritius, either in the form of rich cargoes wrecked on the coral reefs, or hoards of plunder buried by pirates.

The sensational disaster of Both (to this day one of the mountains of the island bears his name), cooled off the enthusiasm of the Dutch and their visits became less frequent. But the French and the English were also by then cruising in those seas; and in 1628 Sir Thomas Herbert visited the island of which he left a grandiloquent description containing some data on the dodo.

The French came on business: ebony from the forests and precious ambergris from the shores. Ambergris in those days was extremely valuable. The Dutch East India Company wanted sole control of its distribution as well as that of ebony. They decided to occupy the island, not only to stop these depredations, but also to establish a settlement where convalescent soldiers from harsher climates would recuperate; a fort-sanatorium.

In May 1638 Cornelius Simonz Gooyer was left on the island with a pastor, eleven artisans, a corporal, three N.C.O.s, a drum and seven soldiers, food and equipment. They immediately started felling trees to build a fort. A French boat from Dieppe turned up. On being asked what their business was, the French declared that they only came for fresh water and food. They were allowed to land. But it was soon obvious that they were after something more substantial as they started unloading wheels and pitching tents. The Dutch were not strong enough to dare to oppose them and all they could do was to hasten the erection of the fort in spite of the heavy rains, the weakness and lack of skill of the men and the inadequate nature of the equipment. In his report to the Company the Dutch commander added: 'One must beware of Frenchmen, especially those from Dieppe'.

And the little garrison strove with various degrees of luck under several commanders. The price of ebony, now plenti-

ful on the market, began to drop off. The men tried planting sugar canes. They were devoured by the rats as soon as they ripened. The commanders naturally tried to extol the merits of the colony in order to retain their position; whilst adverse reports were sent to the Company in Holland from the offices in Batavia which had to support the garrison for such little return.

In July 1658 the island was abandoned. The Dutch were satisfied that there was not on it a single ebony tree worth cutting for the next twenty years. And the new Dutch colony of the Cape of Good Hope was successfully competing with Mauritius as a convenient stopping-place on the way to India. Before going they burnt everything.

The Dutch came back in 1664, having decided to try agriculture. Jacobus Nieuwland landed with twelve men who immediately ate all the stores and left him to die. A few days later his body was found by the captain of a ship newly arrived, who read his diary and captured the offenders. A new commander, Smient, arrived with thirty-two men, discovered a new ebony area and devised a way of exploiting it. But he was unjustly denounced by spies; of these the East India Company had a well organized network. In 1673, under Col, the island was nearly abandoned.

From '77 to '92 Lamotius was commander. He was an educated man who drew the first reliable map of the island. He was denounced by a special commissioner from the Cape, Roelof Deodati, who succeeded him. Deodati, of Italian origin, is described as 'Clever, shrewd, but bragging, crafty and inconstant'. He was famous for his cruel treatment of Leguat and his companions.

After two years on the island of Rodrigues, as the promised second batch of settlers had not arrived, those eight Frenchmen who, with the exception of Leguat who was fifty-five, were all young



A Dutch map of Mauritius, from a maritime atlas, published in Amsterdam in 1753

men in their twenties, decided that they could no longer bear the absence of what Leguat calls 'the most admirable sex'. They built a boat in order to sail to Mauritius. At their first attempt they struck a reef outside, and sank. They managed to push back their boat to the shore, though with such exertions that Isaac Boyer, a Jew and the strongest of the settlers, was taken ill and died in three weeks. From the accurate description Leguat gives of the symptoms it is interesting to deduce that he was struck and burnt by the sun as he lay exhausted on the hot sands, his blisters festered and he died of blood-poisoning.

At their second attempt they reached Mauritius in nine days. This is a remarkable feat considering that they only had a penny compass bought in Amsterdam by

one of them, and they had to ride through a storm during the last three days. They might easily have missed the island.

Their misfortunes were far from ended. They had a lump of ambergris found in Rodrigues. They did not know its value nor the danger attached to its possession. The cupidity of Deodati soon devised a way of dispossessing and arresting them. He took for servants two of the prisoners who were of humble birth and confined the others on a barren rock opposite the harbour. They were left there, in great discomfort, for three years during which they never stopped trying to escape and protesting bitterly. One of them disappeared after an escape to the mainland and the others were finally sent to Batavia. There they were told to wait three years until the next sessions of the courts and,



Construction of Port Louis, Ile de France, depicted during the clearing of the land by fire and 'all prompt agents which art can dictate' in 1738

though all well born, were made to serve as private soldiers in the interval. 'Ce Dieudonné!' explodes Leguat bitterly in his diary; Deodati was for him indeed a cruel gift of God.

Hurricanes, cattle plagues, a drought, and the appearance of pirates had lowered the stock of the colony in the eyes of the Company. In July 1706 the removal of the population was ordered; and the next year a first batch of fifty-four left for the Cape. On that occasion the commander saw fit to give a banquet and deliver a speech finally punctuated by the firing of several rounds of cannon. The wadding set fire to the thatched roof and the whole fort was soon ablaze.

In February 1710 the island was evacuated after the usual complete destruction of the settlement by fire. Two maroon slaves, four deserters from a ship and two Malays were left behind.

For the next five years the island was frequented by pirates only. At this time many treasures are said to have been buried; the procedure was for a slave to dig a hole at night in some secluded spot; he was then slaughtered and buried with the treasure. The pirates would then go to sea for more plunder and perish in the attempt.

The pirates of Mauritius initiated a reign of terror which greatly alarmed the neighbouring French colony of Bourbon. The sea power of Holland had been declining fast, as well as the credit of the Dutch Company.

The Associated Shipowners of St-Malo sent the *Chasseur*, Captain Guillaume Dufresne, to take possession of the island in the name of Louis XIV of France. He landed in September 1715. Soon afterwards an English frigate arrived, too late, with the same intention. The new possession was called Ile de France. In 1721 people started settling on it, depending for administration on Bourbon. It was soon decided, however, to give the Ile de France a commander of its own. M. de

Maupin was the first to hold that office and also to realize the possibilities of Port-Louis as a natural harbour and strategic point. Favourable reports were sent home, where it was decided that a gifted and able man was needed to shape the administration and direct the equipment of this new key island.

Such a man was found in the person of Mahé de Labourdonnais, founder of the prosperity of the Ile de France. He took office in 1735 and built a good harbour and a city at Port-Louis. He encouraged agriculture and opened the first sugar factory. One of his ambitions was to keep at Port-Louis a number of armed vessels ready to pounce upon British merchant ships at the first tidings of war. In 1741 he proceeded to India with five vessels and saved from destruction Mahé, on the Malabar coast. On his return he received orders to disarm his vessels and send them home. A private letter from the Minister, hoping that he had not carried out the orders, arrived too late for him to disobey; and he resigned to devote his time to the well-being of the colony.

In that year took place the wreck of the *St-Gérard*, immortalized by Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's touching idyll, *Paul et Virginie*.

Jean-Jacques Henri Bernardin de Saint-Pierre was born at Le Havre in January 1737 and very soon gave evidence of an impressionable and sentimental temperament. By the age of twelve he had, in turn, violently resolved to become a hermit, a martyr, a Robinson Crusoe, a great colonist. In fulfilment of the first ambition he retired to a wood at the age of nine expecting to have his food brought him by a raven, like Saint Jerome. In fulfilment of the last he persuaded his father to let him go to Martinique, on his uncle Captain Godebout's ship. He came back discouraged by the slowness and monotony of the journey at sea. After reading military engineering he did, on his own initiative, what must have been



A French engraving of the children in Saint-Pierre's idyll of Mauritius, Paul et Virginie. It exemplifies the tropical beauty of the island which captured his imagination

for those days a remarkable amount of travelling. He went to Malta. He was in the first rank of the rush to the court of Catherine of Russia. He hoped to obtain her permission to found a republic on the banks of the Aral Sea.

After living in Poland for some time he drifted back to Paris. There he was assigned to the Ile de France as Royal Engineer. He was planning to go to Madagascar instead and spread civilization in a Utopian establishment when his plans were shattered by his discovery that the slave traffic was rife. He spent two years in Mauritius in discontented mood and he has left in his diaries some bitter criticisms of its inhabitants.

But this morose and restive engineer was capable of enjoying to the full the beauty of Nature and of expressing his emotions in a moving way. He toured the island with two blacks, walking along the shores, absorbing its charm. In his excitement he even tried removing his boots and walking barefoot, an imprudence for which he paid with two days of fever.

Back in Paris the journal of his journey opened the *salons* to the returned traveller. It was a work of tender imagination, full of sensitive and true descriptions.

He lived in disgruntled retirement, pretentious and quick to take offence. The inner violence of his passions deranged his senses. In 1788, he wrote *Paul et Virginie*; the innocent love story of two European children on a virgin soil.

'He read it aloud at the house of M. Necker who was then minister,' writes Anatole France. 'Mme Necker, Buffon, Thomas, were present. Buffon had looked at his watch and asked for his

carriage before the end, Thomas was asleep, Mme Necker thought it was long and its moral boring. But the public, which found it neither lengthy nor boring, was enchanted and wept.'

The fascination which Mauritius has for those who have known it, especially after time has sifted the irrelevant and irksome details, is expressed by the poet in the purest form.

Anatole France adds: 'Two or three years later, he heard under the trees of the public parks nurses by the hundred saying "Keep quiet, Paul . . . Come here Virginie." He was the godfather of all these Virginies and all these Pauls. He had made their mothers cry.'

Castles in Syria

I. Crusader

by FREYA STARK

In England the memory of the Crusaders is kept green by the numerous and often extremely beautiful effigies which, with ankles, knees or thighs crossed according to the number of crusades the warrior took part in, lie so peacefully in many of our Norman churches. But in Syria, the land of their pilgrimage, mightier monuments to the Crusaders exist: the fortresses which they built in the course of their campaigns against the Infidel. Students of the times disagree with some violence in estimating how far the castle-builders were influenced by their first sight of Byzantine military architecture. The older school see in the changes of plan and construction which accompanied and followed the building of these castles direct evidence that Byzantine designs were followed. A younger generation lays down that the best elements in Crusading architecture were brought to the East by the Crusaders from the West. Be that as it may, some of the castles stand, as the following article shows, in undiminished grandeur and may be numbered among the best preserved and most admirable of medieval remains

THERE is a whole mapful of country in Syria, built over with castles in the times of the Crusades, from Tripoli northward to the plain of Antioch, and eastward to the valley of Orontes where the Christian lands ended and Moslem lands began. Here, avoiding motor-roads meant for tourists, and sticking to pathways or those *pistes* which optimistic guide-books call suitable for cars in good weather, you may zig-zag in and out of the water-shed, and look down either on the plain of Hama—green and mauve like shot silk—or on the misty western distances of sea. In April the wild cyclamen and iris are in flower, and red anemones, and asphodel pale and faintly pink as the rocks it grows from: wild, sweet-scented hyacinths grow there, pink primroses, phlox, wild asters, veronicas and yellow daisies; they grow in tufts in the barren limestone pockets, with an elegance of gardens rather than of hills.

The country belongs chiefly to the Ansariye, a people nominally Muhammadan and Shi'a but who keep in their secret religion many traces of the pre-Islamic practice of their land. They believe in transmigration and deny the souls of women, and the groves of their 'High Places', where no tree is ever cut, distinguish the Ansariye highlands from anything else in Syria. They are a peasant people and have never, in all their

history, been subdued though often persecuted, and were first minutely described, in about 1850, by a young English naval officer, Frederick Walpole, who spent two years among them and, having taken their part against the Turks, became, as it were, a temporary king and could wander as he liked about their hills.

Even now this country has preserved its





Freya Stark

Waterwheel and aqueduct on the river Orontes, with the Moslem town of Hama behind

remote character, intersected by few paths; and as you ride there in the twilight, you will meet bands of tall, active smugglers, carrying sacks of tobacco from Latakiah or Baniyas across the border to Hama in the night. In their religion they have kept many of their old Phoenician rituals; the Phoenician temple of Boetocécé, now Husn Suleiman, stood in the middle of their lands and Aradus (Ruad), the island capital lay off the coast below: but in the appearance of these people I cannot help thinking that something of the Crusader has also lingered. They are now less unfriendly to the Christians than to the sects of Islam, and it is likely that the debris of the Crusades may have found a refuge, as minorities most often do, among the inaccessible hills. However this may be, one is surprised to find there many fair-haired, blue-eyed men and women, tall and big-boned with thick wrists and ankles, such as might have come straight from the camps of Bohemond or the Count of Flanders, with high cloth headdress

like a helmet swathed in black. And they have kept their old sport of hawking, so that, when the corn is ripening and if you keep to regions well away from the police (for the sport is very rightly forbidden) you may see men breast-high in the green stalks, with a stick in the left hand and a yellow-eyed hawk on the right, beating to chase out the hiding birds. These little hawks are not kept from year to year, for that would be too expensive, but they are trained for two months with their eyes sewn up until they know their masters, and are then loosed with a bell tied above their tail. As I rode from castle to castle by small and stony paths, and saw these people in their unchanged dress at their ancient game, it seemed to me that very little had altered in these remoter highlands since the days when the Count of Tripoli rode out to hunt and hawk in the plains of Hama.

The Crusaders' castles are chiefly along the coast and in the greater openings of the hills, dominating the more fertile and

The Crusades would appear to be directly responsible for the helmet-like cloth head-dresses and the fair complexions of the Ansariye peasants. In the cornfields of the Hama plain they indulge in the old but now forbidden sport of hawking



Freya Stark

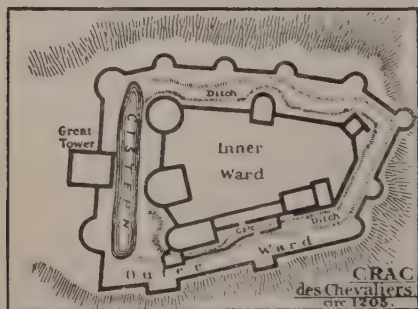


Freya Stark

Of a fine, upstanding type, with large bones and blue eyes, these Ansariye people might indeed have come straight from the camps of Norman or Flemish Crusaders. (Left) An Ansariye mother and child. (Above) A young man



René Zuber



The Crusader Castles of Syria are generally found on high ground along the coasts. The best of them were rebuilt by the two great fighting orders, Templars and Hospitallers. The cavalier's tower of the Crac des Chevaliers is an example of the way in which their walls have stood up against time. In the foreground, spanning the moat, is the ancient aqueduct through which the castle obtained its water supply. A garrison of 2000 men could be accommodated here and a thousand horses stabled. With the exception of Merkab, no finer fortress was built by the Crusaders. (Left) Ground plan of the castle



American Colony

The dominating position of these castles can be realized from a more distant view of Crac des Chevaliers which stands on a promontory a thousand feet above the valley. On one side lie the Orontes lands where Frank and Moslem raided; on the other the triangle of sea, towards which the Crusaders of old must often have gazed with homesick eyes

accessible lands. The best of them have been rebuilt by the two great fighting orders, Templars and Hospitallers, who had money to spare. Crac des Chevaliers, above the motor road, is easy to visit, though it also, I think, acquires an added charm if you come riding up to it by the mule track in the late afternoon, when the day-time tourists have left. A French flag, flying there once more after so many centuries, looks strangely gallant as its crimson catches the light; and one can sit through the sunset and look down from those gigantic battlements and circular towers, and see the small rust-coloured kites below, and the Orontes lands on one side, where Frank and Moslem raided, and the triangle of sea on the other, where so many a glance of longing must have

rested. In the distance, among blue shallow hills, the tower of Safita still shows, easy for signals, and, to those who ride, there are other smaller towers, Areime and Yahmur, in easy reach. The whole system was linked up with a good eye for country, between Tartus, by whose walled harbour the loveliest of Syrian churches stands; along the coast by Merkab, biggest of all the castles; by Sahiun with its ditch and nobly-built cisterns and puny traces of Byzantine walls; until one comes to the wooded country about the feet of Casius, which the Crusaders more often avoided, taking rather the inland easier way by Apamea, whose classic ruins, covered with grass and asphodel, still lie as they did then, 'a difficult ground for horses to manœuvre in'.

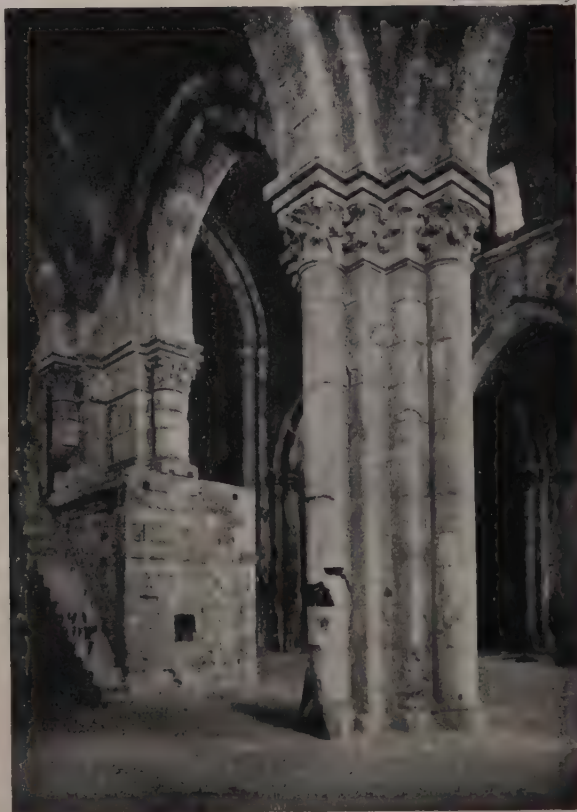


Freya Stark

American Colony

The beach at Tartus, where a walled harbour was part of a system of communications with the Crusaders in their castles. Quite near the old harbour, stands the loveliest—

—of Syrian churches. When the Saracens at last captured the town of Tartus this Gothic masterpiece was turned into a mosque. Now it is a well preserved national monument





American Colony

Merkab, biggest of all the castles, at full moon. It was here that Richard I (1157-1199) who led the Third Crusade, is supposed to have imprisoned Comnenus, ruler of Cyprus (whom he had conquered), for life. (Below) Looking north, along the coast, from the ramparts of the castle

American Colony





American Colony

American Colony



Sahiun, standing apparently in an impregnable position, nevertheless fell in its turn to the Saracen assault. Traces of Byzantine walls may still be seen here and it is notable for its deep ditch, sheer on three sides, and nobly - built cisterns

The main entrance to Sahiun Castle. A drawbridge once spanned the ditch but all that now remains of it is the stone column, surmounted by masonry, seen standing forlornly in the foreground. Schemes to restore the place are now in progress

It was to guard these passes through the hills that the castles were built: but in the more rugged centre of the Ansariye, on spurs quite steep of access even now, the fortresses belonged to the Assassins rather than to Crusaders. Here their chief, the Syrian Old Man of the Mountain, had his home, and his sectaries are still to be found, though in dwindling numbers and much persecuted by their Ansariye enemies. Masyaf, Qadmus, Khawabi, Qahf, Resafa and 'Alleiqua are all Assassin castles whose ruins are visible,—some, like Qadmus and Masyaf, in great open spaces; some, like Qahf and Khawabi, in narrow precipitous gateways of the hills. Khawabi was used in the last troubles against the French, and its single entrance is still closed to protect it at night-time: but the houses built inside it have obliterated all older traces except the outer wall. The building here in any case is poor com-

pared with the fine work of the Crusaders; the strength must ever have been chiefly that of the natural position of these forts. At Qadmus also most ancient traces have vanished; the room where the Old Man of the Mountain used to sit is still kept holy, "but because of our enemies," the Bey said to me, "we call it by another name except among ourselves". At Masyaf, too, there is a shrine to the Old Man, Rashid ed-Din, also called by another name until one inquires closely: it is on the high spur whence he looked down upon his castle, besieged by Saladin below. The people of Masyaf think he is buried there, but this is not according to tradition, which holds the more remote fastness of Qahf to be his resting place. This is the wildest and the finest of these robber holds, with gatehouse carved out of the mountainside on a long, ship-like pinnacle between meeting valleys: from



Freya Stark

Apamea, lying inland, whose classic ruins, covered with grass and asphodel, still form as they did in the days of the Crusades 'a difficult ground for horses to manœuvre in'



Freya Stark

The river Orontes, a silver ribbon winding through Crusaders' country, seen from the Moslem castle of Sheizar—a stronghold which commanded the bridge, and was ever ready to fight

here to 'Alleiq is one day's journey, and from 'Alleiq we rode down to the edge of the Hama plain. All these fastnesses paid tribute to the Crusading Orders; there is a deplorable story of how the Assassins decided to become Christian, and were joyfully accepted as converts by the King of Jerusalem, but were attacked as they rode home unsuspecting, by the Templars, who had no wish to lose a tribute they could not have claimed from co-religionists.

As one leaves the solitary and stony hills, one comes to two of the most beautifully placed of castles, Abu Qubeis and Barze, on spurs of the Ansariye that hem Orontes in. From here, at a healthy height above mosquitoes, you can watch the lovely but malignant water-threaded plain. The Orontes winds its silver ribbon, studded with mounds of cities that have died; the harvests of corn wave rich and deep. On the opposite shore, about sixteen miles away, stands Moslem Sheizar, holding

the bridge and ever ready to fight. Here in this plain, many centuries before, the Kings of Syria met to repel Assyrian invaders; the British here the other day chased the retreating Turk; a sadness and a beauty of many deaths lies over the Orontes valley. We sit in the shelter of Abu Qubeis between its double wall, and watch the fleeting shadows of cloud below, and think—not of the Crusades as we read of them in textbooks, but of the young men who left their northern homes and came to the deceitful beauty of these lands, and never returned, dying mostly by sickness rather than by war. 'Isa, my Ansariye guide who might himself, by his looks, be a Crusader, is thinking the same thoughts. "When one looks at these walls," he says, "one wonders who built them; and even their name is forgotten." But then, reflect, most people are forgotten, and in the lap of a common oblivion it is something, perhaps, to have been a Crusader.

Jamaica Today

by RICHARD HUGHES

Literary brackets are strong: who could think of White without Selborne, or Hardy without Dorset? In the same way those who appreciated one of the successes of modern publishing associate Mr Richard Hughes with Jamaica. His little classic, A High Wind in Jamaica, gave a dream-like, even a nightmarish, quality to the island. Now, in quite another mood, he soberly reviews its present situation and appearance and the troubles that have been disturbing its peace

THE sea (for it is the moment of dawn) wears a milky grey colour. There is no sound, except the familiar rustle of the ship's bow-wave: and the warm breeze, for a little while, is nearly still. Only the sky seems busy: that small glow in the east is spreading with the rapidity of something spilt, and in almost no time the whole enormous empyrean is drowned in brilliant orange light.

Jamaica is in sight. With edges so sharp that they seem to be inked, an uncountable number of peaks stand up—sheer, it would seem, from the sea—against that light. They are a darker grey than the sea; except where a white ostrich-plume of mist clings to the curve of a slope.

As the ship draws closer to the coast, the sky-line changes. The higher peaks, because they are inland and more distant, withdraw behind those which are lower and nearer. The island ceases to be something flat set up on edge. It acquires shape, and moulding: and, as the light increases, colour.

At last the arms of Montego Bay open to receive the ship. To the left lies a long, low point with a minute silhouette of palm-trees. For some reason, it shows no reflection in the now-shining sea. To the right, the flat, swampy Bogue Islands begin to distinguish themselves from the foreshore. Ahead, two schooners lie at anchor: and there is just enough swell for their reflections to wriggle uneasily a little, like the tails of sleepy tadpoles.

There is little in that scene which can have changed in the last century or so. Montego Bay must have looked much like

that when the children in *A High Wind in Jamaica* boarded the unlucky *Clorinda* there.

There is said to be still at least one ex-pirate schooner afloat, turned honest mail-boat among the smaller West Indian Islands: and the schooner which captured those children off the Cuban coast would have been not unlike one of the two traders, now swinging peacefully at anchor in the Roads.

What, then, *has* changed? What is the link between this peaceful and beautiful and unchanging scene on the one hand, and the land of riots, and Labour unrest, and Royal Commissions, and solo performances by Sir Walter Citrine, on the other?

First, is it a problem of colour?

There is no autochthonous race in Jamaica: no aborigines. Every single inhabitant is the descendant of immigrants who have arrived there in the last few hundred years. Nevertheless, only 2 per cent of that population is white. There are a few Syrian and Chinese shopkeepers,





From James Hakewill's 'Picturesque Tour of the Island of Jamaica' (1825)

Montego Bay from an old lithograph. Its appearance has been little changed by the passing of a century except that where once pirates sheltered trading schooners now swing peacefully at anchor

but the vast majority of the population is at least partly of African slave descent.

Such a disproportion could only give rise to two situations. There would either have to be a colour-bar of the most rigid kind, whereby the minute white minority could maintain themselves in a precarious and tyrannical despotism: or else there would have to be practically no colour-bar at all. Fortunately for Jamaica, the latter is the case. In consequence, I know of no other British or American country of mixed population where there is less race-feeling. The contrast for instance between the social atmosphere of Jamaica and of the Southern States of America is most marked to anyone who has lived in the latter. There is even less colour-bar in Jamaica (where there might be some excuse for it) than there is in London (one remembers a shocking occasion when even Paul Robeson was asked to leave a certain Grill: but Bustamente himself, the coloured Labour-

leader of Jamaica, is as free of the fashionable hotels as is the whitest of the white planters). Again, there is no more colour-bar in political than in social life. Most of the Elected Members of Assembly are coloured: and so are the majority of local officials of all kinds.

This does not mean that the white families of Jamaica are decadent, or have in any way unworthily abdicated from a position of imperial trust. This is far from the case. They occupy, and generally occupy well, many of the higher posts in the public service: and without question they have more power and influence than mere numerical proportion would lead one to expect. But the point I wish to make is that this is not due merely to privilege: it is due to the fact that they are on the average abler, and are unquestionably better educated, than most of the negroes. It can fairly be said that their influence is no greater than they reasonably deserve.

There are of course exceptions: there

are white Jamaicans every whit as bigoted as any Southern Colonel. It would not be difficult to quote against me examples of their behaviour which would seem to refute what I have said. But they are in so small a minority!

Consequently unrest in Jamaica cannot be directly attributed to that antagonism which commonly arises from race-feeling. Indeed, it is a curious fact that what race-antagonism exists in Jamaica today has mostly been imported from America: and not imported by the whites either, but rather by returned negro emigrants who have been taught, in America, to hate the whites by American negroes whose grievances are after all perhaps more legitimate.

If one cannot find the causes of unrest in the social tyranny of white over black, one naturally looks to the economic condition of the island as the next most likely source. Here, I think, one will find the answer: but even then the answer is not a simple one—unless you call poverty a simple one, and leave it at that! But poverty itself is only a symptom: and in searching for its roots, in Jamaica, one has to search in many directions.

Some of these roots lie outside the Island, in world economic conditions. Jamaica has always been an exporting country to an enormous extent: and now her exports are severely restricted. That in itself might not be so disastrous as it actually is: the wealth that has been made by the Jamaican planters in the past has been very great, and if that wealth had been reinvested in the Island (or was at least still in Island ownership), Jamaica would be able to live on income—as to some extent England did before the Great War. But unfortunately this wealth, like everything else, was exported as fast as it was made. The rich planter spent his money in Europe—often settled in England, and spent it on a peerage or some other form of grandeeship. So, today, when Jamaican exports are heavily restricted—by quotas in particular, and in general by the in-

ability of the rest of the world to absorb her products—the Island has no savings to live on.

It is obvious that Jamaican economy must somehow be adjusted to the changes which have taken place in the position of the export trade. But unfortunately there are today other circumstances which combine to make this difficult. The most important of these is the rapid increase in the population which has begun to take place in recent years. The Jamaican negress has always been a fertile creature, of a perhaps somewhat excessively 'come-hither' disposition, and large families have always been the rule: but hitherto there have been two main causes keeping the population in check. There has been disease, with a high infant-mortality rate; and there has been emigration to the United States and to Central America. Both these checks have now become inoperative. The emigrants are no longer welcome—indeed, many of them have had to return to their birthplaces: and an enthusiastic Medical Service has abolished yellow fever, has practically abolished hookworm, and has reduced infant mortality in a spectacular manner.

In an island, therefore, faced with a rising population and a diminishing possibility of export, some drastic economic adjustment is necessary: and the first expedient which comes to mind is that subsistence-agriculture should be greatly increased. In Jamaica this takes the form of the demand for a great increase in the number of small-holders. The system of small-holdings is by no means new in Jamaica; there are many thousands of them already; but before venturing to discuss the difficulties which lie in the way of any very great increase in their number, perhaps I had better describe shortly the geographical formation of the Island.

Jamaica is an island about 150 miles long by 50 miles broad; rather smaller, that is to say, than Wales. Now Wales

is usually regarded as a mountainous country for its size; but the Blue Mountain Peak in Jamaica (7350 ft.) is more than twice the height of Snowdon. Only three ranges in Wales have peaks more than 1500 ft. high; but in Jamaica a very large part of the island lies well above the 2000-ft. line; and these highlands, though hilly and rocky and (except where they are cleared for cultivation) thickly wooded, are already pretty thickly inhabited.

The climate at this height is sub-tropical rather than tropical: in the pleasant little town of Mandeville, for instance, you will be glad enough of a blazing log-fire to sit in front of in the evenings.

This wide climatic range imposes a wide variety in the types of cultivation. It is not in these highlands, of course, that you will find the large plantations of sugar or even of banana. The latter lie mostly on the southern coastal plains, which are of huge extent, and are largely reclaimed swamp-land only a few feet (or even inches) above sea-level. The cultivation of land of this type requires irrigation and drainage systems on an enormous scale; and even if it were not already the highly developed property of large owners, it is difficult to see how it could be cultivated economically except (as at present) in units of several thousand acres.

So it is in the highlands that one finds most of the small-holdings; where in some parts there is hardly a pocket-handkerchief of soil between the rocks without its banana-plant or yam-vine. At that height sugar, of course, is not grown, and the coconut-palm is rare: yams, pimento, tobacco, logwood, and a little coffee, have hitherto been the staples of the small-holder.

But that malign fate which seems to await the Jamaican at every turn has attacked the profit of every one of these crops. Logwood was once valuable; but since black stockings went out of fashion, there is little market today for logwood dye. Pimento was formerly a valuable

crop: much of it I am told was exported to Russia, where the moujik appreciated its grateful warmth for the stuffing of his mattress. But today, it seems, the Russian no longer likes his mattress spiced. As if that were not trouble enough, pimento-blight has smitten the trees; and it appears that only those growing below a certain altitude have any chance of recovering. So today as likely as not the blazing logs in your Mandeville fireplace will be the limbs of a once valuable pimento-tree, which the proprietor has been glad enough to sell for firing.

Coffee and tobacco likewise show today little profit; though Blue Mountain coffee is perhaps the finest in the world. The best Jamaican cigars, too, are in my opinion second only to the finest Havana in quality, and deserve to be far more widely known in London than they are; but the fact remains that their export is at present small.

There therefore remain to the peasant proprietor only two crops, the yam and the banana. The yam has never commanded a sale: but it is the staple product upon which the cultivator and his family live. Bananas, on the other hand, he might hope to sell (in fact co-operative methods of marketing were some time ago organized for the purpose): but here again plant-disease has stepped in. Two diseases have smitten the banana crops of the whole Island. Of these, Panama Disease is water-borne, and attacks the roots, while Leaf-Spot is air-borne—its spores travelling through the upper atmosphere at enormous heights—and attacks the leaves. For Panama Disease the only remedy is to dig up the tree and disinfect the ground where it grew. Leaf-spot, on the other hand, can be treated with a spray; but only at considerable expense. Wholesale spraying by aeroplanes is impossible, because it is the under-sides of the leaves which are attacked. Spraying machines have to work from below, and consequently can only be worked economically



All photographs by Richard Hughes

A small-holder's cabin in the Jamaican highlands. These people cultivate often as little as a quarter of an acre. Note the hovering birds: 'John Crows', scavengers of the vulture family



Having a horse, this small-holder takes the long climb home easily, at a canter



In contrast to quarter-acre plots are the big estates. Here a newly-built sugar mill can be seen in the centre of a 12,000-acre holding. The low-lying swampy plains of Jamaica are devoted to the raising of sugar and bananas, while cattle are reared in the hills

in the large, geometrically-planted fields of the coastal lowlands. The mountain peasant, with his two or three trees up some remote lane, cannot hope to treat them except at such a cost as would render the marketing of the fruit unprofitable. In short, the only hope in the face of this disease lies really with the plant geneticist, who is now hard at work trying to breed immune varieties. But even when he has succeeded, of course, the remedy will be slow in taking general effect. It will thus be seen that many of the small-holders at present in the Island are far from being in a flourishing condition, and even leaving out of account the notorious difficulty of persuading wage-labour to convert itself into a peasantry, there are many reasons why at present one must hesitate to feel enthusiastically that an increase in small-holding is a panacea for Jamaica's ills.

It will now be clear that it is not surprising there should be a considerable ferment of political unrest in the Island. Superficially this is taking something of the form of our own industrial revolution: the awakening consciousness of Labour, and the growth of Trades Unionism. But the course of events would make the orthodox student of 19th-century Trades Unionism rather rub his eyes. For Trades Unionism in England grew when a rapidly expanding industrialism was exporting to apparently boundless markets: the manufacturer was not much worried about how to dispose of his goods, but only how to produce them fast enough and in great enough quantities. Hence arose the value, as a weapon, of the strike, which attacked him at his only vulnerable point—production. But when exports are in a strait-waistcoat, and industrialism is not by any means in an expanding state, the strike

ceases to have any value whatever as a weapon. The factory-owner is only too delighted to close his factory for a month or two; for he can make all that he can sell in the rest of the year.

Consider, moreover, the improvements that are constantly being made in labour-saving machinery. Most of the big estates in Jamaica (owing, I can only suppose, to some extent to a social conscience) are by no means in a hurry to install machinery which is going to throw a vast number of their men out of work. But if those men strike, the owners' conscience is salved, the machinery is put in, and the strikers' jobs are gone *for ever*. Not just taken by blacklegs—clean done away with!

On one of these large estates, for instance, I was watching the cane coming in from the fields in 5-ton trucks drawn by tractors. Suddenly amongst them I

noticed a couple of mule-carts, carrying perhaps half a ton apiece, solemnly deliver their morsel into the huge jaws of the crane along with the rest. What had happened, it seems, was that the estate had imported tractors years before, but had hesitated to install them. Then came a strike of mule-drivers, from which only two drivers abstained. At once the tractors were brought out from their sheds. Those two drivers, who had not struck, were promised that they might drive their mule-carts for the rest of their lives; but apart from these two, no mule-carts are ever likely to be used on the estate again.

Nor does the topsy-turveydom end there. For if you talk to the plantation managers and the wharf owners, you will find that most of them are only too anxious for Trades Unionism to be firmly established! They would welcome the convenience, to



Alongside five-ton trucks and tractors on one sugar plantation, two mule carts plod, each bringing in half a ton of cane. The reason is that the mule-drivers remained loyal to the management during a strike and while their comrades were superseded by machinery they were rewarded with a life contract



Labour troubles are today, as they were often in the past, among the severest of Jamaica's problems. Mr Bustamente, seen here on the right, is a fiery campaigner for the organization of Labour—

them, of collective bargaining. For collective bargaining is far easier for the large employer than attempting to deal with unorganized Labour. I heard a manager ask one old lady, whom he saw at work, why she had not been on the job yesterday. She looked up astonished: "Ah *had* a sixpence yesterday!" she said. So long as she had one sixpence, it would not enter her head to do anything so provident as to work for another.

It will be plain, therefore, that the Labour leaders of the Island (such as Mr Bustamente and Mr Manley) have by no means an easy problem ahead of them. They cannot merely employ automatically the tactics by which Labour has won victories in the past and in other countries; and it remains to be seen whether they have the creative ability to deal with a wholly new state of affairs. Mr Bustamente is, I am told, but cannot vouch for it, part negro and part Irish, and brought up in Barcelona; he is an effective dema-

agogue without any question, able to excite and influence crowds with the greatest ability. But (like many enthusiasts) it would not seem that his mind is of a very practical turn. He is often accused of breaking bargains and undertakings; but I doubt whether he does so deliberately: it would rather seem that he becomes so inflamed, on the platform, with the spirit of his own eloquence, that he wholly *forgets* anything he may have said before in his cooler moments. In consequence there is a growing feeling of the necessity of rather more responsible leadership; and at a great mass-meeting a few months ago, it was decided to provide him with a 'council': ostensibly to relieve his shoulders of the growing burden of work, but actually, I suspect, in order to exercise some control upon him, and engender the germ at least of a consistent policy. Amongst the other leaders one of the most able would seem to be a lawyer of the name of Manley;



—but such an object is not easily achieved when the working population includes a large happy-go-lucky element. This old small-holder has a regular job, but, unable to look even a day ahead, she gaily stays away from work directly she has a few pence in her pocket

and it is, in the opinion of many, rather to him than to Bustamente that one must look for a constructive policy.

These somewhat desultory notes are only intended to set down what an observer has seen today, and heard, in the Island. They make no attempt to provide a water-tight solution of its troubles, or to teach the Colonial Office its business: a task which I am only too thankful to leave to the Royal Commission. There is no doubt discontent with the administration amongst all classes throughout the Island; but this is not a matter of detail, and only to a slight extent a matter of personalities. The present Governor seems to be both liked and respected; and it is part of the topsy-turvydom to hear strike-leaders in their speeches referring to him as almost one of themselves. No: discontent is rather with the Whitehall system, which seems to envisage colonial administration exclusively from the standpoint of the career of the administrator. The Governor, and one or two other heads of departments, are sent out by the Colonial Office; but they do not seem to be picked for their suitability for any particular post, but rather because they have reached that stage in their careers when that particular post is their due. When the time comes for their promotion, on they go: probably to the other side of the world; and as likely as not any policy they have inaugurated is completely reversed by their successor.

In Jamaica, for instance, in one case a certain Governor was so much esteemed by his subjects that when the time came for his promotion to (I believe) Ceylon, a governorship which carried with it a substantial increase of salary, the Jamaican Legislature themselves offered to pay this increase of salary if he might stay. But the Colonial Office was obdurate. The time had come for him to move on, and on he must go!

The same system applies to the Medical Services. The local medical officers will be Jamaicans, who give their lives to the work. But the Head of the Medical Service is sent out from London and is usually some senior officer in the R.A.M.C., who is unlikely to have any considerable knowledge of the particular medical needs of the country he is sent to serve. Once installed, he is as hard to remove, until his time is up, as is a Church of England rector; and it is not surprising if it is often felt that Departments in the colonies thrive, not because of, but often in spite of—in fact in the very teeth of—their Heads.

It is this system which lends weight to such desire for Home Rule as you will find amongst responsible white residents. They know very well that, if they had Home Rule, power would be not in white hands but in black hands; but there are many of them who, even seeing this clearly, would prefer *that* to the hands of Whitehall.





Photographs by Schall

High on a rocky spur of the Alpilles, half hidden among menacing ruins and boulders, stands the little Provençal village of Les Baux. From the 10th to the 15th century it was the court and stronghold of the Seigneurs of Baux who took for their arms the Star of the Nativity and claimed to be descended from Balthazar. Their court became famous as the meeting-place of poets and troubadours. Every Christmas Eve, no doubt remembering the supposed ancestry of their patron, players re-enacted the Adoration of the Christ-Child by the Three Wise Men. This pageant was handed down from generation to generation and has now become part of the Midnight Mass with which the villagers celebrate their Pastoral Thanksgiving. On this night of the year the steep paths round Les Baux glow with lanterns as the peasants from the surrounding plain thread their way through groves of wild olive trees up to the little 12th-century church



To the right of the altar, stands a bower, representing the stable where Jesus was born, covered with leaves and flowers, and in it sit the two children who play the parts of the Virgin Mary and St. Joseph. Little angels with silver wings kneel before them, forming a circle round the crib in which lies a wax doll: the infant Christ. As midnight approaches the singing of hymns alternates with the playing of music on the tambourin and the 'galoubet'; for there is no organ, and the whole service is spoken and sung in Provençal. A bell strikes the hour of midnight. The moment of homage has arrived and the little Virgin Mary announces the birth of Jesus, to the Shepherds, singing 'Shepherds, I have great tidings for you from God's faithful messenger. He wills that it be proclaimed.' From outside the church the Shepherds reply 'Herdsmen arise! It is time to set out. Over hill and dale we will play the flute and the tambourin'





The door is flung open and a procession of Shepherds, each walking with his shepherdess, advances towards the priest who turns to greet them holding before him the wax Christ-Child. The patriarch among them leads by the horn a white ram garlanded with flowers and harnessed to a little wooden cart



The cart, twined with gold and silver ribbons, is arched over with green boughs and twinkling Christmas candles. In it on a bed of straw, lies the symbolic lamb to be offered to the Holy Child by the shepherds and shepherdesses who follow reverently behind, each one carrying a lighted taper before them



Now follows the ceremony of homage to the Holy Child. Each in turn takes the lamb in his arms, kneels and kisses the feet of the Infant Christ and makes a gesture of offering up his gift. He then returns to his shepherdess, salutes her and hands her the lamb. She repeats this symbolic offering, afterwards passing the lamb to another of the waiting shepherds



For this Pastoral Thanksgiving the shepherdesses wear the traditional Arlesian costume: a tight bodice crossed over a fichu of ruffled lace, above a full swinging skirt. On their heads are perched little caps embroidered with lace and fruits. Only villagers of Les Baux may take part in the service and the same dresses have been used for many generations



The Mass ends with hymns of praise and thanksgiving. As the congregation kneels in prayer, the choir intones the *Gloria in Excelsis* and the vaulted roof echoes back the sacred words

"GLORY BE TO GOD ON HIGH AND ON EARTH PEACE TO MEN OF GOOD WILL"

The Story of a Patagonian Farm

by R. T. REYNOLDS

AT the tip of South America, six hundred miles closer to the Antarctic than any other land where people live, lie the islands of Tierra del Fuego, separated from Patagonia by the Magellan Straits and with Cape Horn as their most southern point. On the main island, which is about the size of Scotland and bears the same name as the archipelago, the ranges of the Andes after crossing the continent from north to south here run east and west, so blending together in an alpine scene of unusual charm the distance of the mainland's desert and the beauty of its rainy mountains.

An undulating tableland, cut by many valleys and covered with flowering bushes and all kinds of small rock-plants, is encountered over most of the island near the eastern entrance to the straits and extending south along the Atlantic coast for about 160 miles, where wooded hills come down to the beach. This is the northern limit of Viamonte, the largest of our two estancias, and it is the first place in the whole thousand-odd miles of Argentina's coastline where the natural forest approaches the sea.

On one of our long summer days, when late evening and early morning mingle almost without night, my sturdy yellow pony Serrano carried me in 23 hours across the island to Port Harberton, our finest estancia, on the Beagle Channel, where the surroundings are so different that I might have travelled to another country instead of across a small island. Near the Atlantic we continued to cross thickly wooded low ranges, with vegas, wide flat grasslands, in between.

Soon we had left the coast behind and found ourselves among the foothills of the mountains. It was still early when we reached the head of the Lago Fagnano, the largest lake in the sub-antarctic, and galloped along its open beach.

I rode deep into the mountains up a valley in the shelter of high timbers. The trees ended suddenly where our scramble up the bare mountainside began. Once on top I could see the peaks of the Cape Horn islands on the south horizon beyond Navarin and below me, from the snowline, the beech forest, evergreen in many places, sloped down to the Beagle Channel.

This country ahead and the sea passages between it and Cape Horn were the home of the Yaghans, natives who spent most of their lives in small bark canoes. The rest of the island belonged to the Ona, a splendidly grown and fit nomad race. They hunted the guanaco (wild llama) in the summer and in winter moved down to the Atlantic coast in search of seals and shell-fish. The exposure of the mountain crossing had allowed the Yaghans, who were a small people, to live unmolested by the Ona.

MY GRANDFATHER ARRIVES

For over forty years, while civilization was creeping into the south of Patagonia, my grandfather worked to make the unavoidable clash between the stone age and modern times as humane as possible. On earlier visits to the Falkland Islands and Tierra del Fuego he had learned to speak Yaghan perfectly and begun to compile a dictionary which, when completed, consisted of over 32,000 distinct Yaghan words.

In 1871, accompanied by my grandmother and their infant daughter, he sailed from the Falklands to live permanently in Tierra del Fuego as superintendent of the South American Missionary Society.

Grandfather's home was the first white and civilized settlement on the island, a place of call for travellers and the hinge on which the whole work of the mission turned. In recognition of its influence Charles Darwin became a supporter of the Society and instead of the previous massacre of shipwrecked crews this notice began to appear on the Admiralty charts: 'If wrecked or abandoned eastward of Cape Horn the best course to Ushuaia is eastward of Navarin Island through the Beagle Channel. A great change has been effected in the character of the natives generally and the Yaghan natives from Cape San Diego to Cape Horn can be trusted.'

In 1884 the first representative of the Argentine Government, Señor Virasoro y Calvo, came to live at Ushuaia. His father, one of the earliest provincial governors in the Republic, had been shot dead by an assassin at a state banquet in San Juan while his little son was sitting on his knee. After this Señor Virasoro had been brought to England for part of his education before returning to Argentina. When he arrived in Tierra del Fuego, the discovery of gold, which turned out to be of no commercial value, was drawing a hoard of less welcome visitors to the island. Measles broke out. For the natives it was a fatal disease and in their panic they fled to every corner of the land, making isolation

impossible. Perhaps half the Yaghans died of the first epidemic, while those who died later of the chest complaints it left behind made the proportion even greater. Grandfather urged the committee to take the survivors away from these adverse factors and teach them later to take their place competitively in the pastoral development he was convinced would be the real future of the country; but the committee, as other missions were being accused of native exploitation, thought it would be unwise not to confine themselves only to Christian teaching, and the dispensation of charity. Believing that the object of the mission was being defeated by forces beyond his control, Grandfather had resigned the small allowance on which he maintained his home and family, when two friends died in England without heirs and left him £4000 to carry out his own plans. Forty miles east of Ushuaia, where a wide valley opens onto the sea in a maize of fiords and islands, he chose the pearl of the Beagle Channel for his new venture, calling it Harberton after my grandmother's home in Devon.

ASSEMBLING A FARMSTEAD

Next year he again visited England and hired a 480-ton barque, the *Shepherdess*, quite a big vessel then, for only £3 a day, the owners paying the crew of seven and all ship's expenses. She carried for ballast the brick foundations for a wooden house (which is as sound today as when it was put up fifty years ago), sections of the house, roofing iron and general stores for the new farm as well as a bull and a cow, two rams, two pigs, two sheep-dogs and some hens and ducks.

After a good run of 97 days, all of these reached Harberton without loss in the midwinter of 1887. The ship was unloaded in the falling snow of a particularly bad season and the cargo stacked on the beach as there was only a small cabin ashore.

Three days after her arrival the *Shepherdess* left for Pebble Island in the Falklands, where wild cattle were being killed to clear the land for sheep. With the help of an Argentine *gaucho*, Aguirre, and a friend of his, thirty wild cattle were captured and taken on board. Keppel Island was close by, the only place in the Falklands free from sheep scab, a pest it has since cost us over £1000 in a year to cure and prevent. Rather than take it to Tierra del Fuego, Grandfather bought only 200 sheep at Keppel for a sum that would have given him 1000 anywhere else. On returning to Harberton, as there were no fences,

the stock was at first distributed among the islands, after which the *Shepherdess* finally sailed for England with a cargo of Antarctic beechwood. In springtime the eighteen Yaghan families that wished to do so came to complete the settlement.

THE FIRST FOREST FARM

Twenty years later large sheep estancias were occupying the treeless part of Tierra del Fuego and the Ona, who regarded the farmers 'white guanacos' as lawful prey, were being shot out of existence. When a reward made their life precarious in the north of the island they started to cross the mountains and began to find their way to the Beagle Channel. The usable land at Harberton has always been small and the arrival of the Ona, as well as heavily taxing its resources, made them wish for a similar place in their own land. My uncles travelled with Ona guides to where Viamonte is today and there saw year after year's accumulation of growth from some of the finest grasslands of the island lie rotting and unused. In the few months of one summer during which the mountain passes are most free from snow, nearly 2000 sheep were taken to Viamonte over country where no track of any kind then existed. That was the start, on land hitherto believed untenable because of the cover it gave to native archers, of the first forest farm in northern Tierra del Fuego.

In the early years of Viamonte the work of the new farm prevented one of my uncles from returning to Harberton until mid-winter. He and a single native companion climbed the mountainside to find a blizzard, against which it was impossible to see or breathe, blowing through the pass on top. It was the early afternoon and this gave them time to find a hollow and both get into my uncle's sleeping-bag before night came. The snow drifted over them and during the seventeen hours of winter darkness they remained striking each other to keep from sleeping and freezing stiff.

Estancia Viamonte extends over 120,000 acres with 21 miles of coastline and has, since its beginning, sent over half a million frozen lambs to help provision England. At present our flock of grown sheep is about 40,000, varying according to the seasonal growth of grass and other considerations. Were it not for the severity of winter that number could be increased to probably 120,000; but for the worst four months the sheep really live on the immense quantity of fat they put on in the autumn.

THE STORY OF A PATAGONIAN FARM

Fences split the farm up into thirty large fields planned so as to give an equal amount of forest and vega to each. These are the flock's winter quarters. To watch over them and protect us from robbery, wire-cutting and other works of evildoers we have nine shepherds' houses, three of them connected to headquarters by telephone.

No one is left alone on Viamonte in winter, so the houses are two- or three-roomed, warm and dry, with plenty of windows and a good cooking-stove in the living-room. They are usually situated on the edge of the forest with an open view facing the sun in front and behind the shelter of the trees, which provide unlimited fuel and also hide kennels and a stable. Enough stores are sent up in the autumn before the tracks get bad to more than last the winter, and Viamonte is so well watered by its four rivers and innumerable brooks and springs that good water is always at hand.

Like most of our employees the *puesteros* come from a very poor region on the mainland, where imported articles used to be so scarce that sea-going schooners were built from chopped, not sawn, timbers and pegged together with wood instead of nails! They are in consequence one of the hardest people alive and work for us chiefly to gain a reserve fund to help them develop their own holdings up north. Some of them, like the natives of the south, have a very oriental look.

WAITING FOR THE SPRING

Communication within the estancia is never impossible by shod horses or pony trap. Even so, many of our shepherds find the short winter days and the long idle nights of candle and firelight very trying and everyone is glad when the break-up comes and the ground changes from its monotonous white. Conscripts who have become used to town life in the army and those whose education has aimed at turning everyone into an office-man or a technician rather than giving them the means and the point of view to make the best of any situation, are the ones who feel the winter most.

In November, our spring, some forty men assemble at Viamonte and ride out again, in company with nearly 100 horses, fifty sheep-dogs, a cook, his satellites and two bullock-carts, for three weeks under canvas while the lambs are mustered. Work begins early, soon after 3 A.M. before it is possible to see at all distinctly, as the sheep hide away in the forest and will not drive well once the sun is high.

The cook beating an empty paraffin-tin rouses the camp from its slumbers and one reaches out from the blankets and drags on riding-boots often stiff with frost. The horses, caught and left tethered under the trees the night before, are saddled on the way up to the log-fire where everyone has a warm up, a hot mug of coffee, and roast chops, rice and dumplings or doughnuts, all well spiced after the custom of the land.

A SHEPHERD'S DAY

Before 4 A.M. the shepherds are on the move towards some strategic spot for driving one of the fields, this begins by taking positions about 300 yards apart in a long line stretching over two miles. When the last man is in position he begins a shout that is taken up by the whole line and the advance starts through the forest, keeping position by the noise, which also frightens the sheep ahead. Dogs patrol the area between each shepherd, hurrying on straggling sheep and giving warning by barks if any stay behind.

At the end of the drive the sheep, whose 'baas' and hoof-beats by now drown all other sounds in a terrific din, are taken to a pen where the rest of the men are waiting. Here the lambs are counted, marked and returned to their mothers. By the time the three drives necessary to clear a field are over, it is well on into the afternoon and a late two-course lunch with mugs of tea is served in camp. Catching and changing horses, and making beds occupies the next few hours till dinner is ready, usually a roast, vegetables and coffee. Most people would be surprised at the excellence of camp food, especially with the sauce of the open air and good appetites. After a final cup of coffee and doughnuts the camp turns in at nine with the sun still up. During our next camp, the round-up for shearing just before Christmas, it never really gets dark at all.

The shepherds bring in over 2000 woolly sheep a day for the month that shearing lasts and take out the same number of shorn sheep to their pastures in the evening. The estancia settlement occupies a long foot-hill to one of the coast ranges. A thick wood grows over all the western part of the hill, sheltering our houses and gardens from the westerly gales that blow with clock-like regularity during summer. To obtain increased shelter for the corrals, the ridge of the wool-shed roof stretches in an unbroken line across the top of the hill where the wood ends.

The sheep approach through a series of corrals which split the flock up into groups small enough to be easily handled.

The next process is the separation of the lambs and sheep into their different classes. In the middle of the corrals there is a narrow passage; while the flock runs through it in single file, one man, operating small doors that momentarily block the passage and allow a sheep to escape at the side, can sort a flock into four different classes.

Inside the shed the sheep come in at one end and advance in regular order towards the shearing line. Each shearer has his own small catching-pen kept filled for him with about six sheep. It takes him two minutes on the shearing-floor to take off a fleece with machine-run shears like a barber's clippers. Two men are up and down the whole time carrying the fleeces to tables, where each is rolled into a bundle and thrown up to the grading floor.

OUR OWN WOOL EXPERT

Unlike the expert that comes from England to grade our neighbour's wool, our own man 'took his degree' in Tierra del Fuego. Manuel Rockfish, an illiterate, first learned the differences in wool in the early days of Viamonte when he picked out fleeces for the women of his family to make clothes from in the North. The first year he graded for us our wool-brokers in London sent him a letter of congratulation on his work!

Finally a hydraulic press squeezes the loose graded wool into small $\frac{1}{4}$ -ton bales for transport which gives a picture of the real difference between past and modern times, the change from blood transport, the tool and implement to the powered machine.

Six carters and 200 cattle were formerly employed in taking our wool to the port. Four years ago we sold our carts and brought the first Ford V8 lorry to the island. In place of the cattle, which except as beasts of burden were always an expense, we have 800 sheep that give us their wool and 1000 lambs every year and leave our carters in better employment caring for them.

The coming of machinery and manufactured articles, even in entirely grazing country like Tierra del Fuego, has increased the produce of the farms, made inaccessible places accessible and wages steadily able to purchase more, until now luxuries which would never have seemed possible to anyone in the days when the estancia was founded have

been brought within the reach of the smallest wage-earner. Yet with all this progress comes the realization that the prosperity of Tierra del Fuego has become dependent on that of Argentina and on international commerce in which channels of trade, perhaps used for generations, have recently disappeared. Markets, prices and even currencies become unstable and the threat of strife hangs over all.

At the start my grandfather might just possibly have achieved some degree of entirely local civilization, but once a different course has been followed turning back becomes impossible and to meet sweeping changes in external conditions the estancia must be ready to make equally sweeping changes within itself—changes which, owing to the part wages must play in any reconstruction, will need the full backing of everyone concerned if they are to be successfully carried out. Thus the keystone of our organization passes from stock and then machines back to people.



Inside a Sussex Monastery

by FRANCIS SANDWITH

WITHIN five minutes' walk of that highway of pleasure—the Brighton Road—there dwells a community of men, vowed to silence and the mortification of the flesh, who live in much the same way as their brethren in the reign of William the Conqueror.

These men are monks of the Carthusian Order, one of the strictest orders in the Christian Church.

St Hugh's Charterhouse—all Carthusian monasteries are called Charterhouses—was completed in 1883, at a cost of approximately £200,000, and is situated within a few minutes' walk of Cowfold, a typical Sussex village. The Charterhouse is an impressive collection of buildings, built of light yellow stone, and covering nearly ten acres of ground which is enclosed by a high wall. Some idea of the immense size of the monastery—the largest in Great Britain—may be gathered from the fact that the cloisters are nearly a mile long.

The spire of the magnificent church, dedicated to St Hugh, a famous Bishop of Lincoln, is two hundred feet high.

The buildings include a library containing some twenty thousand volumes, which have been beautifully bound in leather by the lay brothers.

Thirty-nine monks live behind the walls of St Hugh's. Of these twenty-two are 'religious', or priests; the rest are postulants, novices and lay brothers. The latter minister to the material needs of their brethren. They observe a less rigorous rule than the 'religious' and form what is called 'The Family'.

The government of a Carthusian house is much the same today as it was eight hundred years ago. The Prior is the Chief Superior; he is responsible for the spiritual welfare of the community. He observes the same austerities and wears a hair shirt underneath his thick woollen habit.

Before describing the Carthusians' mode of life it is perhaps as well to explain its object. The Carthusian, like the Trappist, is a contemplative order. This does not mean that Carthusians spend their days in pious dreaming. Spiritual sloth is sternly condemned by the Statutes, or rules, of the Order. The Carthusian is a mystic. He renounces the world in order to perfect his spiritual nature—to

'commence his apprenticeship for Heaven on earth'—so that he may be better fitted to pray, not only for the salvation of his own soul, but for the salvation of souls in the dusty world outside the monastery who do not know the meaning of prayer.

Men come from all parts of the world to test their vocation for the life, but, according to an authority, only one man in a million becomes a Carthusian. The silence and the fasting would send most men mad.

Novelists are fond of depicting monks who enter a monastery on account of some unfortunate love affair. But visitors to a Charterhouse will search the cloisters in vain for disillusioned men who have taken refuge there to weep over their lost ideals. They will meet men, vowed to an austere life, but with a firm grip on reality, and who are more likely to be smiling than weeping. A Charterhouse is no place for sentimentalists.

Suppose a man feels a burning desire, or vocation, to become a Carthusian monk. He must fulfil the following conditions:

He must have received a good classical education in order that he may understand the Church services, which are in Latin, and be able to follow the courses in theology and philosophy.

He must possess sound health.

He must possess a 'supple character' in order that he may willingly obey the 'just and reasonable commands' of his superiors.

He must be of a sufficiently sociable disposition to prevent possible discord in the monastery.

He must have paid his debts.

The candidate, provided he is able to fulfil these conditions, is invited to spend a few days in the Guest House. The time is spent in prayer and meditation. At the end of this period he is presented to the Prior who himself examines the candidate's aptitude for the Carthusian life. If, in the Prior's opinion he is suitable, he is given into the charge of the Master of Novices. He becomes a postulant. A simple ceremony marks his entry into the cloister. He is conducted into the choir of the great church where, in the presence of the members of the Order, the Master of Novices kneels down and humbly washes the feet of his new charge and covers them with white woollen stockings. The postulant is then given a long black cloak, which covers his ordinary clothes, and is led to the cell he is to occupy thenceforward.

The cell is really a four-roomed cottage. It is built of one storey

and is adjoined by a small garden surrounded by a high wall. The postulant, on entering his little home from the cloister, first finds a short corridor—the ambulatory—where he may walk when bad weather prevents access to the garden.

The two rooms on the ground-floor contain a store of wood and a lathe with a carpenter's bench and tools necessary for manual work. Climbing a flight of stone stairs the postulant finds an ante-chamber, which may be used as a workroom, while the adjacent room is the cell proper. Here the Carthusian studies and prays. The cell—as befits a man vowed to a life of penance—is sparsely furnished. Against the wall, facing the large window, is a curious wooden structure divided into three unequal spaces. At one end a door gives access to a lavatory. The middle is taken up by a bed, hidden by curtains. There is a straw mattress, with woollen coverlets and a chaff pillow.

At the further end of the wooden structure is an alcove, fitted up as an oratory. Facing the window is a desk where the monk studies and takes his solitary meals. In another corner there is a bookshelf of theological works which may be added to by the loan of books from the library. From his window the monk looks out on to his little garden, bright with flowers in summer. The church tower looms over the high wall surrounding it. There is a clock in the tower so that the monk is aware of the time.

The postulant does not, as might be imagined, find the hours hang heavy on his hands. He does not spend his day restlessly seeking new forms of occupation. The Carthusian Statutes, which are remarkable for their psychological insight, guard against the peculiar dangers of the solitary life. A time-table regulates every hour of the monk's day. So many hours must be given to mental prayer and study, while, in order to preserve the monk's health, a certain amount of time must be given to manual work. He cuts wood for his stove, cultivates his garden plot, and on his lathe turns articles for missionaries. He may even paint pictures (some Carthusians are talented artists) or he may mould statues which are sold for the benefit of the monastery.

The Carthusian, with the exception of Sundays and Chapter days when he dines in silence with his brethren in the refectory, takes his meals in the solitude of his cell. The monks are not strict vegetarians, but meat is forbidden. The Statutes are inflexible on this point. Even in case of mortal sickness meat must never pass a monk's lips.

The diet is wholesome and consists of one good meal a day, which is passed through a hatch in the cell by a lay brother. It consists of soup, an omelet or fish, bread and cheese, and a little wine or beer. During the great monastic fast which lasts for seven months of the year, from September 14 until Easter, the monks exist on a more rigorous diet. On Fridays the community fasts on bread and water.

In no circumstances may a Carthusian leave his cell except to attend church, to dine in the refectory, and to participate in the weekly walk. But the Carthusian does not always keep his lips sealed. After dining in silence with his brethren in the refectory he is permitted a little social intercourse. Some of the Carthusian fathers are keen chess players. Others prefer draughts. Once a week the monks take a walk in the surrounding country. During this walk, which lasts for three and a half hours, the monks are permitted to converse. The Statutes forbid the discussion of politics or topics likely to cause discord. Indeed, a Carthusian is unlikely to discuss politics since he never sees a newspaper. The weekly walk is regarded as being of the greatest importance since it helps to keep up the monk's health and spirits. The Prior would sooner let a monk off the Night Office for some days, or grant him a dispensation from the fasts of the Order, than release him from attending the walk.

The Carthusian spends five hours out of the twenty-four in church. The greatest event of his day is the Night Office. It is a ceremony of unique beauty. At eleven o'clock the great bell in the church tower begins to toll. The cloisters resound with the thud of closing doors. Little flickers of light dance, like fireflies, in the shadows. Round a bend in the cloister comes a file of monks, each carrying a lantern. They walk with their cowed heads bent. The shuffle of their boots on the stone of the cloister is the only sound. Thirty-nine monks pass. Three paces between each. Slowly the procession enters the church. The bell stops tolling. The church is almost in total darkness. The only illumination comes from the red sanctuary lamp burning before the High Altar, and the shaded lamps over the choir stalls. Silently each monk takes his place in the choir. The postulants, in their black cloaks, may only dimly be discerned. The intense silence is broken at last by the deep voices of the monks chanting the Divine Office. (There is no organ in a Carthusian church.) The surge and swell of the chant is like the sound of the sea breaking on a

lonely shore. At the break of dawn the singing abruptly stops. The monks file back to their cells. The twitter of birds alone breaks the silence of the Charterhouse.

Four hours later the Carthusian again meets his brethren in church. On solemn feast days the monks spend not less than six hours in church.

The postulant observes the rigorous code with the same severity as the professed fathers. The postulancy usually lasts one month. During this time the postulant studies the Statutes and the ceremonial of the Order while his Superiors consider his aptitude for the life. At the end of the postulancy the young monk abandons his ordinary clothes, hitherto covered by the long black cloak, and receives the religious habit. The habit consists of a white tunic and a white cowl reaching to the knees with a hood attached to it. He has become a novice. The noviciate lasts one year but may, at his Superior's discretion, be extended for a further six months. If at the end of this period he is still considered suitable he takes the first vows which bind him to the Order for a period of four years. He takes the Vow of Stability, which binds him to the monastery in which he lives; the Vow of Obedience to his Superiors in the Order; and the Vow of the Conversion of Manners which places him under the obligation to turn away from worldly things and seek spiritual perfection. Implied are the vows of poverty and chastity.

After making this, his first profession, he becomes a junior professed monk. Four years later, if he still desires to remain in the monastery and is considered to possess a vocation for the life, he disposes of all his worldly goods—to whomsoever he pleases—and takes the final vows. Prior to taking this final, irrevocable step, the monk is free to maintain such relations with the outside world as family obligations necessitate; his relatives may stay in the Guest House and see him within the humane limits prescribed by the Statutes.

There is considerable misconception about the Carthusian's mode of life. Until the monk takes his final vows, at least five years after his admission to the Order, he is free to depart. In fact, an aspirant experiences far more difficulty in gaining admittance to the Order than in leaving it.

That the Carthusians lead a healthy life is beyond doubt. Centenarians are, proportionately, more common in the Charterhouse than in the world outside.

A Toda Wedding in the Nilgiri Hills

by Stanley Jepson



The Todas are a pastoral people, numbering now only about 600 souls, who live in little villages called mands, scattered about an undulating plateau in the Nilgiri Hills of Southern India. Their funeral rites were described in our pages in January 1936. Equally interesting are their marriage ceremonies which begin with the assembly of a family party outside one of their elaborately thatched huts

The bridegroom bows himself down before the bride's father who graciously extends his foot. The bridegroom touches it with his forehead and receives formal assent to the marriage. He also presents his future father-in-law with a garment for the bride and a buffalo. For every phase of Toda life is connected with their herds of sacred buffaloes—their only source of wealth



The musicians play a fanfare for the wedding guests. At all the most important feasts and festivals, and also at funerals, it is the duty of the Kotas, a neighbouring tribe, to provide music. They are of course paid for their services, in grain and buffalo-meat, but they are looked upon as nothing more than artisans and therefore as social inferiors



Besides music there is gaiety and beauty at a Toda wedding: one of the bride's contemporaries, who delights in her stylish little pink parasol (imported from Europe). Her curls are freshly fixed with butter, and though her dress is the customary plaid-like blanket, she wears it with an air, so that part at least of her tattoo marks, and her jewellery, are revealed

Now the time has come for the bridal pair to go back to the bride's hut. All night the bride's mother stands on guard outside, to keep inquisitive callers away and to pass in food. Note the miniature doorway which is the only entrance



Radiant faces in the morning show that the bride will not exercise her privilege of declaring the marriage 'off', which she may do by a shake of the head. In that case both she and her groom would be free to marry elsewhere if they wished to do so



The bridegroom is naturally overjoyed that the marriage promises to be a happy one. He seals the contract with his little bride by placing around her neck a necklace of ivory and seed pearls. Although polyandry is common and permissible among the Todas, there are instances, of which the present has all the appearance of being one, of so true an affection existing between a man and his wife that they devote themselves to each other alone for the whole of their lives

A Modern Exodus

by ANN BRIDGE

IT is possible to drive across France from the Atlantic to the Mediterranean in one day, if you get up early enough and hurry a little; and to do so is rather like driving from Ireland to Africa, by road all the way. For the gentle rounded hills, the small woods and deep-green pastures of the Basque country are curiously like Ireland—the ‘frontons’ for pelota outside each little town recall the handball alleys of west of Ireland villages, and the very flowers are the same: *Erica carnea* and St Dabeoc’s Heath, whin and bramble and hazel. After all, both are Europe’s Atlantic coast, and though the broad-eaved ch  let-like farms are not like Ireland, and the cattle are big and beige instead of small and black, the likenesses are greater than the differences.

After an hour or two of this you reach the centre of the continent, at once typically French, with avenues of planes or poplars bordering straight roads, and towns and villages of tall houses capped with high grey-tiled mansard roofs; but after Foix, with its three incredible mediaeval towers on its improbable conical hill dominating the neat smug little town, you wind your way gradually, through valleys where all the orchard trees are bright ochre with lichen, and between the castelline walls of limestone gorges, out into what seems Africa—Africa or Spain: the white bones of the rock coming out through the soil, the splendour of line and shape of the very ground, misted over but not concealed by the silver of olive-yards and the pale gold of the great belts of dead reeds along the dry stream-beds, flecked with the rich vigorous green of *ilexes* and umbrella pines and cork-oaks—the houses all heat-resisting now, white-walled, with flattish pink-tiled roofs.

Nor is the sense of being in Africa wholly fanciful—after all, what makes a country? Vegetation and wild life have at least something to say to it; and it is the fact that from about Narbonne down to Gibraltar, through the thickness of a belt roughly ninety miles wide, the flora and the insect life, notably the butterflies, of the European coast of the Mediterranean are predominantly African.

Spring in this country comes early and barely perceptibly—a shy flush of wild almond along the banks and roadsides, a golden fire of wild mimosa racing through the evergreen scrub on the hills. So much

of spring in French Catalonia we saw as we swung into Perpignan, took a quick Cinzano and dropped a tyre to be mended, and raced out again towards Elne and Port Vendres.

Before Port Vendres the road winds high above the sea, and our first sight of 'Mare Nostrum' showed us the grey funnels of a British cruiser sticking up out of it. The man we had come to meet was on board that cruiser, we hoped, and we twisted cheerfully down the bends of the most dangerous road in Europe into the town, and pulled up by the harbour.

But no one could remain cheerful for long in Port Vendres at the end of January, 1939. The quay was choking with crates of oranges, slowly rotting—the blue-grey of mildew showed through the slats. More oranges, and refugees, looking almost as decayed as the fruit, were being unloaded from a rusty and battered steamer; some of the refugees were pulling the oranges out of the less-solid crates and eating them; the harbour-master, with a worried air, was supervising the removal of this dismal cargo, while crowds of sight-seers from Perpignan and Narbonne looked on. On the pavement opposite the quay little groups of men, women and children sat on extraordinarily miscellaneous heaps of baggage—bedding, iron cooking utensils, suitcases, bundles of all sorts. They did not seem to be doing anything or going anywhere; they too were eating oranges.

We wished to wireless to our cruiser. We spoke to the engineer of the *Stanbrook*, in from Barcelona and moored at the quay-side; his wireless, he said, was bent. We drove on, round the port, to where a French destroyer lay moored alongside a broad quay flanked by a big three-storey warehouse; while the destroyer, with charming politeness, did some signalling for us, I inspected this warehouse.

Every ten minutes or so a lorry pulled up in front of it, packed to capacity with refugees, who were unloaded by one or two police and stowed within like so much merchandise. I made my way in too. The whole floor of the building was spread with clean straw, on which human beings sat among their bundles, just like the people on the pavement; in one glass-built office inside the door a single Customs clerk was examining their wretched belongings as they entered; in another, further along, a Red Cross nurse and two girls were brewing tinned milk over a spirit-lamp and doling it out to the younger children. I asked the nurse if she had enough milk—she said No. I gave her

a 100-franc note and went on. Upstairs the two higher floors were already fuller than the lower one. Except in the two glass offices there were no lights; there was no water anywhere, no sanitation except to go outside—this, being Spaniards, the refugees were not troubling to do.

I went out again. Rain had begun to fall, but still the lorries rolled up, and still their damp and wretched contents were bundled out and bundled into the warehouse. Round at the back I came on two field-kitchens, rather rusty—a little queue of people was getting coffee from one, under the other the fire had gone out; there was not enough coal. I handed out another note and went on again. In the town, in spite of the falling rain, the groups on the pavement were still sitting, still eating oranges; the sightseers had gone home. But remorselessly the lorries continued to roll in from Cerbère, at the frontier, and to pour their loads into that already choked building. "Si," said the first lieutenant of the destroyer, contemplating them, "si nous n'en avons pas pour le typhus pour dix ans, je m'étonnerai!"

It was too late to go to Cerbère that night. By the time we had the answer to our message darkness was falling with the falling rain; we decided to take a chance on the second spare wheel and drive straight to our quarters for the night at Amélie-les-Bains, a little town given over to sulphur baths in the mouth of the Tech valley, which runs parallel with and close under the Pyrenees.

As we drove back through Elne we met, in the dusk of the ancient streets, an apparently interminable procession of motor-cycles, ridden by Gardes Mobiles in tin hats and carrying rifles, each with a companion in the side-car, moving up to regulate and check that formidable flood of desperate humanity which was now poised, like a wave about to break, along the frontier ridge. Beyond Elne we forked left towards Le Boulou—out in the open plain there suddenly loomed up ahead of us an immense white shape, faint and dim in the shadowy rain—the Canigou, lit by an unseen moon.

Presently we drew in under the hills, and now, on the small, wet, lonely roads our headlights picked up curious sights: now a car parked by the roadside, full of huddled forms and exuding baggage; now a group of men in shabby uniforms, rifles and blankets slung anyhow round their shoulders, with wild, white, desperate, unshaven faces. We had been on the road over thirteen hours, and we wanted our dinner, for our last meal had been a sort of pre-lunch of coffee and

rolls at Foix: how long had these been afoot, and when had they last eaten?—above all, when would they next eat, where sleep, that wet night? It took most of the comfort from dinner and bed, for us.

It was curious enough, the setting for our dinner and our beds. By the time we reached Amélie it was black dark; asking our way of the rare passer-by—Amélie retires early—we came by a steep street into a small steeply tilted square, set with plane-trees, and found our hotel. The hot water in baths and basins ran straight from the sulphur springs—there is no variation in its temperature, for it is heated by God in the depths of the earth; it is hot enough to heat the radiators too, and does so. The fountain in the square has a hot as well as a cold spout; next morning I watched the housewives filling their *brocs* at it. So incalculable, in this strange place, are the riches of the healing waters—in other and far more famous thermal establishments, how jealously and carefully husbanded! In spring the whole of Amélie-les-Bains is full of two smells—sulphur and mimosa; for the rest of the year it is plain sulphur.

Next day we went up to Cerbère. In the railway station below the frontier pass a pile of loaves eight feet high stood in a corner, and the hungry had dry bread handed out to them liberally, while wounded were bundled in and out of ambulances, and harassed officials, civil and military, tried to load and despatch trains and lorries, and to keep some sort of check on the names and papers of the sodden and exhausted mass of humanity which surged in on them, hour after hour. Trains could not pass the six furlongs of tunnel which runs through into Spain—aeroplanes had been bombing Port Bou, at the further end, and the fleeing troops had taken refuge in it; they said there were ten thousand of them in there.

Two days later this tunnel was *deblayé*, as the French euphemistically expressed it, by the Senegalese, who pushed the whole lot out at the far end—God knows how they did it, or what was done, in there underground.

We drove on up to the pass. A wire rope guarded the actual frontier, manned by Customs men and Gardes Mobiles, the latter also spread out across the open hill on both sides. Cars from Spain were not being allowed to pass the rope—beyond it they stretched in a solid line down the mountain road, packed as close as they could stand, for six or seven miles. Some of the owners were sitting in or by them, in the biting wind, hoping to move later; others were coming up on foot,

among the endless stream of people who had no cars and lugged their suitcases, trunks, and bedding on their shoulders and in their hands. Up there I was offered a 1939 seven-seater Chrysler for 2000 francs—about £12; anything to get a little French currency. (A Perpignan *garagiste* with a car pass for the frontier, next day, bought two brand-new lorries for frs. 100 each, or about £1 : 2 : 10 the pair, up at Le Perthus.)

We stood and watched them moving heavily past us, this nation in flight: old women with their white hair plastered by the rain on their yellow faces, young girls who a day or two back had still had the spirit to paint themselves with the rouge washing down their necks, swinging huge trunks between them, staggering under the weight and slipping in the greasy mud; women with flowered bedspreads over head and shoulders, sheltering themselves and the babies they carried—little children tagging along, each brandishing an iron spoon. The iron spoons seemed to be a recognized part of refugee technique, those and the metal vessel with two handles, foot-bath or whatever it was, slung with the blankets across a parent's back; when you came—if you ever did come—to where 'Los Quacros' had set up a field-kitchen, you stood in the queue and got the foot-bath filled with food, and the children gathered round and ate it with the spoons, and then drank—one must drink, even in the rain—from the roaring gutters, full of orange peel, dirty paper, mud and cess, to quench their thirst.

The rain really made it quite unbearable. The wretched little flimsy cardboard suitcases melted, and the poor treasures that had been chosen as too precious to be abandoned—imagine that choice!—fell out into the mud and were trodden into pulp. They couldn't be rescued and they couldn't be carried any more, and that was that—and all those days and hours of exhaustion and arm-strain were wasted. When you were too tired to walk any more you sat down where you were, in the mud at the roadside, in the beating rain, and just waited. Perhaps a lorry would come along—anyhow you had no idea where you were going or where or when you would arrive. It was the road to nowhere.

Human misery on such a scale can hardly have been seen in Europe since time began. It was not only at Cerbère, remember: there was Le Perthus; there was Prats le Mollo; there was Bourg Madame; and besides the great roads, every path, every mule-track, even the open snowy slopes were thronged with the same pitiful processions, on a front of close on a hundred miles.

The following day we spent at Le Perthus. We drove, still in pelting rain, up the valley road through that subtle richness of vegetation, illexes and olives and cistuses and cork-oaks to the little straggling town that bestrides the pass. Here again was the frontier chain, and beyond it, before the cars began, a mob of human beings, packed vertically like asparagus in a tin, two hundred yards deep, pressing against the barrier to be let through. Now and again a small group was passed in; the town itself was already seething with refugees—ten thousand, it was said; and up on the hills on either side of the actual pass the smoke of their camp-fires, rising between the cork-oaks, mingled with that from the fires of the soldiers guarding the frontier line. There were field-kitchens in the street, and long queues behind them, the foot-baths and the iron spoons; the captain of the Gardes Mobiles, the acting Mayor, and one or two other minor officials referred to the tired-looking young men who were running them as 'les Quakers'. It was only two or three days later, and by accident, that we learned that they were not Quakers at all, but the Amalgamated Society of Printers. But you see in Europe today, from Bilbao to Bucharest, those who, regardless of politics or personal danger, tend the sick and feed the hungry *are* the Quakers—they must be, since that is what Quakers do. By their fruits ye shall know them.

A lingering passion for culture, which years and disillusionment cannot quite dispel, causes me invariably to move about France with the appropriate volume of the Guides Bleus in my pocket. As we drove down from Le Perthus that afternoon, soaked through, hungry and cold, leaving the ten thousand sitting about in the rain, wetter, colder and hungrier than we, I began to read my Guide Bleu. The road through Le Perthus, I learned, was the old Via Domitia, by which Hannibal entered Gaul; where it nears the plain the curious, by climbing down to the stream, may come on some fragments of Roman masonry—the footing to a monument erected by Pompey 'to celebrate the successful termination of the War in Spain'. *Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose!*

Such misery had not perhaps been seen in Europe before, since time began. But it had been foreseen. All through that searing week one sentence from the New Testament rang continually in my head: 'Pray that your flight be not in the winter'.

A Journey to Scotland

by JAN STRUTHER

THE great thing about A. is that she manages to combine great intelligence with a most endearing gullibility: endearing, that is, to certain members of her circle who enjoy playing jokes and are hard put to it to find suitable victims. Victims, perhaps, is too strong a word: for of course I am not referring to anything so crude as practical jokes—pranks involving physical alarm or inconvenience, such as wet sponges on the door, apple-pie beds, concealed alarm clocks, or bits of string stretched ankle-high across doorways. I suppose you could call the other kind theoretical jokes. A mental start or stumble is the most they are intended to produce, and it is of the essence of them that they should leave the subject (a nicer word than victim) feeling not annoyed but amused. That is where A. is so admirable; she has the innocence to fall into the trap, yet the wit to appreciate it afterwards. In fact, her delight in the tricks which are played on her almost outdoes that of her tormentors.

There was, for instance, the occasion when we introduced her to another great friend of ours, having first drawn each of them separately aside and warned them that the other, though very charming and intelligent, was extremely deaf. A simple idea, but infinitely rewarding. Each looked a little puzzled at first, but soon remembered that deaf people cannot gauge the loudness of their own voices. We were well into the cheese soufflé before they began to suspect anything.

Then—passing over various jests on the telephone and elsewhere which were too ephemeral to write down—there was the incident in a Soho snack-bar, when by an elementary ruse we induced her to utter, in clear ringing tones, an apparently meaningless combination of letters which was the only word of Japanese we knew: thus causing two very prim little Japs, who were sitting beside us, to look at A., look at each other, and slip silently from their perches to sit at the other end of the bar. It wasn't such a very bad word, at that.

But the most elaborate as well as the most successful joke which we have ever played on A. took place only a couple of months ago, when we had the good fortune to conduct her on her first visit to Scotland.

We went up by night, without sleepers; but luckily we had a compartment to ourselves. About half-past twelve A. dozed off in her

corner, and T. and I discussed in whispers the plot which we had hatched before leaving.

"But only", T. stipulated, "if she wakes up anyway at Carlisle. *Too* brutal otherwise." Fortunately she did wake up. "Brr!" she said, shivering. We had taken in some cold air coming over Shap. "Where are we, anyway?"

"Carlisle," T. said with a casual yawn. "Better get your passports ready, gurls—we're near the Border." He pulled his out of his pocket. I did the same.

"*Passport?*" said A. aghast. There was a moment of pregnant silence. Then T. said in a very restrained voice:

"A. Dearest A. You don't mean you've forgotten it?"

"You *never* told me you needed passports for Scotland. . . ."

"I thought everybody knew," said T. "Well, the thing is, what are we going to do?"

"Oh Lord! Do you mean they may not let me through?"

T. shook his head. "Not a hope, I'm afraid. They've got much stricter lately."

"Look," I said, "at what happened to poor Vicky. But then, of course, *she* was trying to cheat the customs as well."

"Customs?" said A. "I never knew you had to pay duty on anything into Scotland."

"Only on woollen things," I said reassuringly. "To protect local industries, you know."

"But look here," she wailed, "I've got a brand-new suit of tweeds and two new sweaters and three pairs of new thick stockings."

"Better declare them all," T. advised her. "The duty can't possibly come to more than three or four pounds, and they're terribly hard on any attempt at smuggling. They fined Vicky twenty-five."

"Well, anyway," said A., "I'm desperately sorry to have been such a fool, but I simply must go to sleep again now. Wake me up when we get to the Border."

She slept soundly till Edinburgh. We tried to persuade her that we had bribed the Border officials for her while she was asleep, but in the clear light of dawn she suddenly saw through the whole fabrication.

By the time we had had baths and breakfast, however, she had regained her faith in us. So in the course of a twenty-mile drive from Edinburgh to Gilbirnie, where we were going to play golf, we were able

to point out to her at least a dozen places which have been made famous by folk-song or history.

"We are just passing Flodden Field," said T. as we left the suburbs behind. "Of course there's nothing much to see there now. But Cul-loden is more interesting. That's about ten miles to the west: we'll come back that way if you like."

"Thrilling," said A.

A little further on I pointed out a small spinney of birch-trees on the right. "The Birks of Aberfeldy," I said. "And you see that old house over there? That's where they wrote out the order for the Massacre of Glencoe on the back of the nine of diamonds."

"Goodness!" said A. "And shall we see Glencoe itself?"

Hastily running over in my mind the rest of the road to Gilbirnie, I said no, I was afraid not. But shortly afterwards we passed a nice little wooded declivity which I was able to offer her in compensation as the Pass of Killiecrankie.

"Now keep your eyes open," said T. a few minutes later. "You'll catch a glimpse of Loch Lomond just round this corner." For a moment I thought he had over-reached himself, but I had forgotten the Meiklegowan Reservoir, as pretty a little artificial lake as any in Midlothian.

"Oh!" said A. "I imagined it bigger than that." But she agreed that its banks were quite definitely bonnie.

Two or three miles further on T. snapped his fingers.

"What a fool I am! I need some petrol, and I forgot to change my English money at the hotel this morning."

"Change . . . ?"

"Too stupid of me. Have *you* got any Scots money on you, J.?"

"I didn't change much," I said. "The exchange was so rotten this morning, only four-twenty to the pound."

"Four-twenty what?" asked A. suspiciously.

"Bawbees," said T. But this was going a little too far.

"Good Lord!" she said. "You've been at it again, you devils. I shan't believe a single other word you say about Scotland the whole time I'm here."

The game was clearly up, but I made one last effort to save the situation. I had, as it happened, a Scots pound note which I had taken away by mistake last year and had thriftily saved up sooner than lose

sixpence on it in England. I took it out of my bag and handed it to A.

"Look here," I said. "*Now* perhaps you'll believe us."

"Oh yeah?" said A. scornfully, cockahoop in her newly found scepticism. "I can't imagine where you got it printed, but if you think I'm going to be taken in by a bogus-looking thing like that, you're mistaken." And before I could stop her she had torn it into small pieces and scattered them superbly out of the window.

It was an expensive joke, that one. But not, we decided afterwards, dear at the price.

